



**JULIUS EVOLA**

**THE WORKER  
IN THE THOUGHT  
OF ERNST JÜNGER**



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# The Worker in the Thought of Ernst Jünger



TRADITION



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## Curator's Note

One aspect of the personality and activity (one cannot be separated from the other) of Julius Evola, which has not yet been well focused and thoroughly analyzed, is that of the cultural promoter, deli\*organizer: in fact what in one area Giuseppe Prezzolini did and did, in another-that of traditional and revolutionary-conservative thought-Evola did: both, from their respective points of view, tried to rejuvenate and de-provincialize the culture of Italy in the first half of the twentieth century by recovering neglected or dimen- tified authors, presenting what was new and nonconformist happening outside our borders, without prejudice, popularizing new trends, and identifying worthy novelties. For Evola, on the one hand one should list all the works and/or authors that he pointed out in the original editions in hundreds of articles and reviews or that he indicated in the bibliographical notes of his books and that were then translated only after dozens of years, and on the other hand one should methodically examine all the translations of books that he carried out, under his own name or pseudonym, for various publishers, and try to realize whether any cultural or ideological threads can be discerned in them. An area still almost entirely to be explored.

The topic arises on the occasion of this edition, new and augmented with other material, of *The "Worker" in the Thought of Ernst Junger*^and one can limit it to the German-speaking or "Central European" area, Confò known Evola promoted, or tried to promote, translated, presented

Bachofen, Weininger, Meyrink, Spengler, fùnger. Schmitt, to mention only the most important ones. That in some cases he did not entirely succeed in his purpose, or that the results were achieved after a long time, does not detract from his intentions and prescience and, by contrast, highlights the deafness if not dullness of a certain Italian publishing culture, both during Fascism and in the postwar democratic period. In both cases, although for different reasons, anything that could rightly or wrongly be labeled as "mythological," "irrational," "occult," and lastly as "Nazi" was viewed with hostility. Typical, just to give an example discovered after many decades, was Laterza's refusal to print in the 1950s Professor Reisinger's essay *Nietzsche and the Meaning of Life*, which Evola had translated during his hospital period and proposed, because of Croce's negative opinion, which had rejected not the theses of the work but *the argument*: after Franco Laterza had called it "excellent," it was "rejected by the literary direction of the Biblioteca di Cultura Moderna," i.e., by the philosopher and his daughter Alda, because "it was deemed inappropriate that we, who had suffered from the fruits of Nietzsche's philosophy for 20 years, should continue to deal with that philosopher" (letter from Franco Laterza, Feb. 20, 1950, in *La Biblioteca ermetica*, edited by Alessandro Barbera, Fondazione J. Evola, Rome 1997), The essay thus had to wait over twenty years to be printed by the publisher Volpe.

Returning to Italy in the last months of 1948 and after an initial period of uncertainty about his future fate, Evola realized that his doctrinaire and "rectifying" activities had to continue despite his impaired physical abilities: "And if I had the sense, that I was required, if I saw the possibility of grafting my internal availabilities into a superindividual spiritual action, really nothing would be changed there" (letter of April 20, 1948 to Girolamo Comi). In addition to revising his own books, beginning to write "doctrinaire" articles for the "national" press, and designing works more suitable for the Italian situation that had come about with the defeat, Evola sought to resume old contacts or to make new ones, always with the aim of providing new ideas-bases, new insights, new authors-for those who wanted to survive in that "world of ruins." His natural predisposition as a cultural promoter and organizer suited the times that had changed so much since the 1930s. This is the reason why, within a short time, he resumed or attempted to resume contact with Guénon (1947), Eliade (1951), Schmitt (1951), fùnger (1953) and Benn(1955): often Tintention was to propose the translation of some work by these authors that in his judgment was particularly



significant or important to present in that new and bleak Italian reality.

It did not always succeed, and for several reasons. The first was the more or less overt aversion of certain major Italian publishers to authors at the time viewed with suspicion or even hostility because of their ideas or politically "compromising" past. The second, the caution of some of the respondents: this is the case of Schmitt and Jünger. Their non-response to Evola's requests to translate certain of their specific texts into Italian, or the difficulties and objections interposed, can be linked-and it is not difficult to guess-to the fact that they did not want to multiply the problems they already had at home (prison, ostracism, prohibition to publish, controversies of all kinds) and to some extent abroad, and traceable, in the latter case, both to the name that acted as their go-between (i.e. Evola, who carried their own "brand"), and probably to the publishing houses with which they could have been translated in Italy.

Thus Evola failed to reach an agreement with Schmitt to translate-long before his "rediscovery" by the official Italian intelligentsia-some of his writings for the publishing house that Giovanni Volpe launched in 1963-4, just as a decade earlier he had failed to get permission from Jünger to translate *Der Arbeiter*. And while he says nothing about Schmitt in his autobiography *Il cammino del cinabro* (1963), here is what Evola writes instead about the Jüngerian attempt: "I had long proposed to make the book [*Der Arbeiter*] known in Italy by means of a translation. But in rereading it I became convinced that with a translation the purpose I had in view would not be achieved. In fact, in the book the good parts appear mixed with others that for a reader incapable of discrimination may undermine them, because they are affected by local German situations of yesterday, nor do they take into account experiences whose full problematic nature has appeared in the meantime. In addition, there were some editorial difficulties. So I dropped the laugh of a translation replacing it with that of a broad summary based largely on excerpts from the book, with separation of the ancillary or spurious parts, in order to highlight the essential and the durable: adding a minimum of critical framing c illustrative."

These are the same things written, more succinctly, in the 1960 introduction to *L'«Worker» in Ernst Jünger's Thought*, with reached of "editorial difficulties," which become generically of "various reasons" in an article that appeared in 1960epoin 1974 (given in Appendix). Which ones? Perhaps those of expediency (from Jünger's point of view) that we speculated, since of the correspondence that is supposed to have existed between Evola and the German writer there exists in the Jünger Archive only one let-

tera of Evola, not others and not copies of Jünger's own responses: at least it is this Tunic missive that was kindly provided to us by the writer's secretary before his passing.

The Italian thinker's letter to the German writer, dated November 17, 1953, and which is reproduced below in its entirety in the original and in Marino Freschi's translation, poses not a few problems. In fact it stands in sharp contrast to an interview, given during one of his trips to Italy, in which Jünger stated about Evola; <sup>(W)e</sup> have been a couple of times to visit me in Germany and I had a long correspondence with him. Evola maintained the importance of myth and its supremacy over history: this was the most interesting fact of our affinity." (*The Secolo d'Italia* 1 November 1986). The opening ("my name should be known to you") and concluding lines ("the ever-postponed opportunity to have Tonore make contact with you even in person") are unequivocal and rule out either direct or epistolary acquaintance between the two before that 1953. The questions that must properly be asked are then the following; 1 ) could Jünger have had such a precise "false memory" in 1986? 2) or was it a translation error, and perhaps it was the German writer who met Evola at his home in Rome after 1953? 3) or even, instead, was it an invention, but what then was the purpose? 4) or was there for real a meeting: but then one must imagine a paralyzed Evola's trip to Germany after 1953, which is not impossible (in those years the philosopher was, in spite of everything, in good physical condition and made frequent trips by train to Bologna, the province of Modena and other places to stay), but highly improbable, since there is no trace or any evidence of it; 5) and the "long correspondence"? does it exist or does it not exist? and if it does exist, what happened to it? The questions remain suspended, however, and will not be resolved unless some probative *document* or *testimony* is tracked down that will dissolve the dilemma.

For Jünger and Evola, as Marino Freschi notes in the introductory essay, one can almost speak of two parallel lives, at least up to a certain point, namely the traumatic turning point of 1945; from then on Evola will seek in Jünger only what seems to him most valid, and without hypocrisy: he not only says so in several of his speeches, but will also write so in the letter now cited. At the same time, his reservations about some theoretical and existential points postulated by the German writer do not arise suddenly. There is, in this volume, sufficient material to make a comparison on the key-Jüngerian text, i.e. *Verheiter*: see the Evolian reservations of 1943 and those of 1960, or even Tef- ficacious summary of the Opera when he examines *At the Wall of Time*: the first

influenced by the ongoing war and whose fate is uncertain; the latter by the post-war atmosphere (and here are the references air "armistice," "cold war," "opposing power blocs," the hypothesis of a "warlike use" of the "atomic age"), but essentially the same; indeed, as early as 1943, the image emerges - now canonical - of the "ruins of the bourgeois world of the Third Estate." The paths, then, diverged after the defeat: while Jünger would continue to write according to his consolidated interests (novelist, scientific and "external" observer, scholar, existential philosopher), Evola took on the task of pointing out those paths, inner and metapolitical, personal and of place in the world, that could lead to a "salvation" with respect to the society born of the catastrophe of '45. After all, both were faced with Modernity: and what Evola reproached Jünger for was precisely that he had succumbed on that front: as he wrote in 1956, his last production, "if it represents progress from the literary point of view, it nonetheless accuses a visible fall in level as far as spiritual tension, political horizons, and vision of life are concerned." That, precisely, which on the contrary Evola proposed in his writings of the same era.

Hence, one must take into account "when" *The ^Ope- vaio* "was elaborated in Ernst Jünger's thought. the second half of the 1950s, that is, together with the final draft of *Riding the Tiger* (already written in part, or perhaps even all of it, at the beginning of the decade) under the pessimistic influence of the Italian political-existential situation and the disappointments produced for him by the youthful circles close to him, mixed up in what today would be called the "politicalist politics." It is obvious, therefore, to assume that Evola considered this work of his - albeit "minor" compared to others - as complementary to certain of his texts, and that he had summarized and adapted *Der Arbeiter* by emphasizing what he himself considered "positive" and still usable, eliminating the superfluous and the no longer topical, precisely in order to bring it in line with certain of his positions that were already known or would soon become so. And from this point of view, his critique of the Jungian *Waldgänger*, which has many points in common with "apolitia," appears singular, and for that matter "the way of the salamander passing through the fire," that is, Modernity, of which the German writer speaks in the *Irtaier*, is an exact parallel with 1 ' Evolian "differentiated man" of *Riding the Tiger*, whose spiritual non-compromise with Modernity makes him pass unscathed by any test.

While rejecting Jünger's "optimistic" approach and cloaking his entire commentary with a skeptical, though not totally pessimistic, aura, the point of view from which one poses oneself is identical: what to do, how to behave, in the world of modern technique, technique that does not

has "neutral character, of mere means." 11 problem that arises then, according to Evola, with respect to the Jiingerian "optimism" that sees in theT "Ope- raio" a new human type capable of mastering it, is the following: "What space does technique and the presupposition of it, science, leave for a vision that is not only activist or agonistic of the world? It is clear that science of the modern type involves a complete desacralization of the vision of the inworld (...). In what way, in what terms a spiritual, sacral and metaphysical dimension of society can come back and concretely assert itself in a humanity that conceives of the universe in pure terms of modern science and technology, thus in a disanimated world, it is difficult to imagine."

The Jiingerian "Worker," as "rectified" by Evola, that is, stripped of its no longer topical, or superfluous, or utopian characteristics, can then from the traditionalist philosopher's point of view still be useful as an existential model for the "last times," for the times in which Technique is the most totalizing expression of Modernity, even if it has onnai assumed aspects certainly not conceivable in the 1960s: think only of the developments in cybernetics (computers and "virtual reality" above all) which, even in their "abstraction," are no less concrete and engaging. Even in the face of these newest expressions of Science and Technology, Jiinger's (and Evola's) lesson is illuminating and therefore useful: always "an age of dissolution" is involved, even if in unimagined forms. "

After all, one realizes what Jiingerian ideas, and even expressions, have been taken up by Evola exactly, or rethought and reworked in more congenial ways: from "heroic realism" (which is not materialism at all, as the traditionalist thinker repeatedly stresses), to the concept of *elites* brought to an existential level as well (and which is not "race selection"), to the insistent clarification of the difference between "freedom *from* something" and "freedom *for* something," to the common idea about the need to constitute "Orders" instead of "parties," and so on, up to the stress that "the whole problematic of Jiinger is about turning the negative into the positive by means of a change of sign." is, as is well known, the common thread of *Riding the Tiger*, inspired by the Eastern saying of "turning poison into medicine."

All this, beyond contingent misunderstandings, makes it possible to profitably read in parallel certain Jiinger and certain Evola as interpreters of Modernity and as their antidotes, the former also from a literary (narrative) point of view. Of this Evola - Marino Freschi points it out well - had noticed, perhaps the only one, for a long time: his recen-

sion of *On the Marble Cliffs* is illustrative since in this "symbolic novel" Evola highlights the fact-we are in 1943 let us not forget-that "a clairvoyance pervades him, superior certainly to that of the period of *Der Arbeiter*, adequate to the seriousness of these times" (*Der Arbeiter*, let us remember, which was not translated into Italian during Fascism, but more than half a century later).

Of this particular attention, including critical attention, of the Italian thinker to the multifaceted German writer, the present volume is meant to be a testimony. In fact, in addition to *L "Worker" in the Thought of Ernst Junger*, revised and corrected with a comparison between the 1974 and 1960 editions, annotated and with bibliographical references, four other Evolian interventions have been added over a twenty-year period, 1943-1960, cbe becomes a thirty-year period if one considers the last appearance of *To the Wall of Time* (1974): even the repetitiveness that some of them present is useful for comparing on the one hand Pevolverside|Topinion Evola had of fùnger, and on the other hand the confenna of certain reservations. Reservations that, as already noted, the Italian does not conceal from the German, albeit with due tact, in the unpublished letter that we publish here and from which an important element emerges: Evola and fùnger apparently never met in person in the 1930s and 1940s, even though they nurtured (despite their differences) a mutual respect (see *Heliopolis* sent - four years after its first publication, a truly singular fact - with dedication) and frequented common circles.

The punctual Jungian bibliography prepared by a specialist such as Francesco Fiorentino will be useful to those who want to delve into the universe of the writer from Heidelberg, while the image chosen for the original cover of *Metropolis* (for which I thank Alessandro Crossato) is a symbolic image that well represents Modernity, in its scientific and technical aspects: its so to speak "feminine" face, its positive and negative sides. After all, Fritz Lang's film, or rather his wife Thea von Harbou's screenplay-novel, appeared five years *before* *V Arbeiter*. want to represent just that: the dangers of the modern hyper-technical world and the possibility of mastering them without being overwhelmed or encompassed by them if one has a new, different approach with them, not in the Marxist sense of class struggle.

*Metropolis* is, after all, just like *VOperaio*, a vision of the world's futures in the key of a positive anti-utopia.

*Rome, November 1997*

## Jünger and Evola: a dangerous encounter

### 1. jünger

In a seminar with German writers and critics, after heated discussions about avant-garde writers, I asked about Ernst Jünger. Michael Krüger, a young and already established poet, replied ironically, "Why, is he still living?" meeting with the amused complicity of his colleagues. It was August 1980. In the meantime, we have archived some of those writers, while Jünger continues to be on the agenda, both as a "case," a provocation, a challenge, and as a surprisingly prolific author who still knows how to amaze with such unpredictable works as the detective novel, set in *belle époque* Paris, *A Dangerous Encounter* of 1985 to celebrate his ninetieth birthday. When the old man from Wilfingen became over a hundred years old, controversy flared up again. His work and thought continue to disturb even now. Jünger is not welcomed into the ranks of writers and thinkers of our time with the detachment and balance that the score of the time would suggest. There is in his regard a knot that does not untie, an animosity that no longer finds its foundation in the fierce struggles and ideological contrasts of the early twentieth century when the Heidelberg writer sided decisively with the opponents of the Weimar Republic, alongside the spoilers of the slender German democracy in the name of a paradoxical mythology that united the enthusiasm of the volunteers of the

1914 with the social passion that exploded in 1917. Jünger with Ernst Niekisch was the fiercest exponent of that patrol of national Bolsheviks that represented the most extremist, picturesque wing of the Conservative Revolution. It was a small group of young veterans, unscrupulous, fond of provocation, of the most parasitical and absurd intellectual challenges. They were young men who had abandoned their high school desks to throw themselves into the thrill of the Great War, in which they discovered the horror and terror of death caused by advanced technologies, and founded in psychological and moral resistance to "material warfare" the new human model - that they believed they recognized across the various armies, under the various uniforms and in the handfuls of revolutionary workers in the shocked Europe of 1918, which witnessed the collapse of the last traditional Empires, the dissolution of Habsburg Mitteleuropa, the swaggering, reckless conquest of the Tsarist Winter Palace, the honorless flight from the imperial residences of the Hohenzollerns and Habsburgs, and the birth in the trenches of the Arditi and D'Annunzianism at the origin of Italian fascism.

The upheaval of old Europe was seismographically felt by such refined intellectuals as Thomas Mann, author of the *summa* of neo-Romantic and conservative thought with the *Considerations of an Impolitic*, or such as Oswald Spengler, who in the same city of Munich, in the same months, was writing his masterpiece *The Decline of the West*, he too using the same historical categories as the Mannian mortology with the irreducible polar opposition between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*, borrowed from nineteenth-century *Kulturkritik*, that of the great German intellectual season with Nietzsche and Burckhardt. History had become the field of mythographic exercise, in which mind-boggling spiritual constellations such as the Faustian Spenglerian man or from a completely different perspective the *Geist* Utopie, the spirit of utopia of Ernst Bloch, a lively philosopher who revived with messianic anxiety the positivist project of Marxist sociology. In those months of the rout, Germany was the grand laboratory of modernity, where as early as 1920 the famous little book of notes that volunteer Ernst Jünger shoved into his backpack was published and which now with the evocative title *Steel Storms* inaugurated - years in advance - the wave of documentary literature on the Great War, grounded in the autobiographical memoirs of veterans who from various, often opposing ideological standpoints were attempting to realize the momentous turning point that had been the First World conflict. There was a veritable flood of reminiscences from the front, including Remarque's famous pacifist best-seller *Nothing New in the West* from 1929,



preceded in 1928 by another successful veterans' diary: *War* by Communist writer Ludwig Renn, who is Jünger's authentic literary antagonist. Renn is the pseudonym of Arnold Friedrich Vieth von Golssenau, an aristocrat of ancient lineage who in the face of the war and the Revolution of November 1918 understood, with personal generosity, that world history was opening up to a new anthropology with the founding of a new humanity, that of the veteran, the revolutionary, and also the worker, the *Arbeiter*, who represented the central figure of Jünger's work in the years of the Weimar Republic. A sentence such as the following turns out to be significant of that searing atmosphere of research, confrontation and unscrupulous ideological disruptions, whereby the traditional tensions of parliamentary democracy of left and right found themselves inadequate to reflect the vital intellectual workshop that was Germany of the time:

"Race has nothing to do with racial concepts of a biological nature," Jünger states in *Der Arbeiter*, his main theoretical essay, published in 1932. "The form of the worker mobilizes, without distinction, the entire human condition."

This transversal "culture" is recognized in the art of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, of the New Objectivity, which reacts to the subjectivistic exasperation of expressionism and of its flaky *pathos* of pseudo-Franciscan sentimentalism. In the Weimar Modernity, the new century were gradually making their way through a patchwork of behaviors, mentalities, ways of thinking, acting, reacting less and less conditioned by the *Wort* of the *Wort*, as Léon Daudet had called it in his 1922 book of the same name, subsequent to the Futurist, Cubist exaltation and the Italian "novecentismo" of Massimo Bontempelli. In Vienna, meanwhile, Musil was confronting his gigantic literary project of the *Uomo senza qualità*, built on the provocative yet possible oxymoron of "soul and exactitude," while Gennep was discovering with amazement the posthumously published novels of Kafka, centered on a shocking depiction of the figures of the anxious, anonymous and pervasive anxiety of contemporaneity. Hermann Hesse, who with *Siddhartha* in 1922 had inaugurated the exotic symbolism of literary pilgrimages to the East for restless Western souls, published in 1927 with *Der Steppenwolf* a novel attuned to the climate of spiritual quest and abysmal glimpses into contemporary nihilism, extolling transgressions, unregulated experiences on the edge of consciousness, open to the didactic use of sex as breaks from the customary boundaries of historical personality in order to recover the atavistic dimension of a supposedly original authenticity of man, finally detached from the patterns

social. That same year Franz Tunda, the Rothian hero of *Escape Without End*, was traveling the continents from Siberia to Paris, hostile to Bolshevik ideology as well as bourgeois society and Nazi rhetoric, in the name of absolute inner freedom. Yet that enormous tide was now overflowing the banks of precarious bourgeois security and solidity, mercilessly sweeping away the most fragile exponents of reductivism, soon enlisted and seduced by the new totalitarian rhetoric, lined up in the annulated ranks and hailing leaders with populist charisma. There were few who remained immune to the various ideological contagions, who did not accept the honors and trappings, who did not allow themselves to be regimented in the squads that behind new pennants and flags, with shirts of various colors, ultimately served old economic interests. Junger - like Evola in Italy, who never joined the PNF though he did not identify himself with the findings of the Croce or Communist opposition - knew how to maintain his neutrality, his spiritual freedom. Already in the *Operation* he had identified the difference between the party revolution and that of the *4r6e/Zer*. There were few Germans who wrote such judgments in 1932:

"Wherever in Germany people believed they were doing revolutionary work, in reality they played at it, they played at revolution. Authentic revolutions took place invisibly, in the silence of quiet secluded rooms, or concealed behind the glowing curtains of battle. But what is truly new did not need to manifest itself through revolt. Its greatest danger consists simply in its existence."

Such perspicuous wisdom, such a detachment from the intriguing tangle of the Weimar crisis rested on a spiritual experience, the secret of which only rarely surfaces in the *opera jungeriana*, as happened in the extensively revised second edition of *Das abenteuerliche Fieri. Figuren und Capriccios* (*The Adventurous Heart. Figures and Caprices*) of 1938, distributed in later editions to German soldiers at the front and partially translated as an appendix to *On the Marble Cliffs*, edited for the prestigious "Medusa" Mondadoriana series in 1942 by Alessandro Pellegrini. In those autobiographical recollections, Junger lifted, with extreme discretion, the heavy curtain of the mystery of his initiation into a remote wisdom:

"Nigromontanus initiated me into the method. He was an excellent teacher, of whom, unfortunately, I only hardly remember. Perhaps I have forgotten him almost entirely, for he loved to make traces disappear behind him, like some animals that dwell deep in the forest. But the simile is not well chosen, and it would be more appropriate to resemble him

to the ray from a light source that makes visible what is hidden, inentTessa remains in the realm of the invisible."

What is surprising in Jünger's production is that extraordinary ability of his to move from one plane to another: from the horizons of theTu-topia tecnicadell^rtó/er to the refined elegance, to the subtle allusion to an esoteric presence, to a Pythagorean suggestion, which by way of initiatory chain re-proposes the elusiveness of the Hermetic arcana, right in the land of the mysterious Rosicrucian masters:

"Nigromontanus could tell of solitary spirits, whose abode seems to be among us, and yet is inaccessible. Such ones, accustomed to the pure ardor of the fiery, in its high degrees, only when the proximity of the supreme danger makes it bearable to leave the solitude, then they come forward."

That spiritual experience had to come to an abrupt halt. Similar to the unwary apprentice in Zanon--Bulwer Lytton's initiatory novel--Jünger also strayed into the dark wilderness in pursuit of the alluring and treacherous idols of his time:

"Unfortunately, it is true that I soon forgot his teachings; and instead of persisting in my studies, I joined the Order of the Mauretans, these subordinates of the power."

Like a red thread rOrder of the Mauretaniens, of the Mauretaniens, runs through the entire Jüngerian oeuvre without having aroused the indiscreet curio- sita in critics. The phenomenology of the Order, present in all places, in all alignments, even if opposed on the level of political and social struggles, attentive to the pursuit of power and the unscrupulous use of power, might suggest an all-powerful secret association, to a kind of inflated and sublimated metaphor for Freemasonry, whose adherents in German are called *Maurer*, a name that offers some assonance to *Mauretanier*, Nigromontanus may be a particularly wise man, immune to the persuasive song of the Mauretanian sirens. as well as may depict a teaching, a symbol of inner holding, a spiritual aspiration, a style, a message, a mission and imperative, or allude to a contact-living and/or ideal, external and/or internal-with (or an) esoteric tradition:

"Nigromontanus taught me the certainty that a choice host among us, long since removed from the libraries and even from the dust of the arenas, in the most secret chambers is at work, in a very dark Tibet. He spoke to me of men who sit in nocturnal chambers, solitary, motionless as the rock whence bursts the flame that moves the wheel yonder and animates the army of machines; but the flame is in them estranged from all immediate purpose, gathered in hearts, which removed forever from

any outward light are, however, warm trembling cradle of all strength and power."

It remains an open question whether these figures are remembrances of ecstatic frequentations, extracted from the most secret facets of lived experience, or lucid poetic depictions. Perhaps these visions are a harmonious literary composition of fantastic suggestions, dreamlike enchantments and autobiographical cues, Goetheanly of poetry and truth. After all, in Masonic circles, as well as in circles gravitating around the culture of the Conservative Revolution, independent researchers were roaming around proposing suggestive paths of operative wisdom. Evola himself in the days of *Pagan Imperialism* and *Ur* fascicles frequented personalities close to Masonic esotericism, such as Arturo Reghini, and Pythagorean alfemietism of the Kremmertian academies.

Esotericism is the golden and icy vein of Jüngerian production, the esoteric suggestion flows copiously in the novel *On Marble Cliffs*, as well as in later works, often translating into lightning-fast diaristic annotations or fleshing out the figures, the Ges/oteAzjüngerian, from Oràe/teral wise inhabitant of the "Eremodella Ruta, from the recent *Anarch* to the unscrupulous metaphor of the *Waldgänger*. Tattraversator of the forest, the rebel. Even in the closest production the esoteric trace resurfaces, sometimes exhibiting flashes of occult practices as in the epilogue of the 1977 novel *Eumeswil*, when the protagonist hints at the magical operation of the mirror, well known to Western esotericism and widely attested in occult literature:

"These days, to prepare myself for the forest, I worked intensively in front of the mirror. I thus succeeded in achieving what I had always dreamed of: complete detachment from physical existence. I visualized myself in the mirror as an aspirant to supersensible knowledge ----myself, in comparison, as its fleeting reflection. Between the two of us burned, as always, a candle; I bent over it until the flame burned my slingshot: I saw the wound, but felt no pain."

Manuel Venator, having fallen into a swoon, is revived by the Taiutante Chinese Kung, who swears him to silence about what happened. This is the last communication of the protagonist who disappears into the *Wald* as an authentic *Waldgänger*, an anonymous inhabitant of the dark forest, while from the Black Forest in Upper Swabia from time to time his author would deliver a message that fell into the din of controversy always busy establishing whether and to what extent the writer had compromised with National Socialism. A disturbing question, but one that is

by now, after a debate of more than fifty years, somewhat exhausted if it were not, such questioning, one of the masks with which the carefree spirit of the age, like a modern guardian of the threshold, forbids access into the hidden heart of Jüngerian work, safeguarding it from profane gazes and frequentations.

However, while not wishing to reopen a long-standing and contrived controversy, we deliver for the meditation of the curious reader a valuable testimony of a German writer, Alfred Andersch, fiercely anti-Nazi, with a communist past that caused his internment in the Dachau *Lager*. Antifascist consistency and intellectual honesty dictated this reflection to Andersch, linked to the emotion caused by reading *Marble Cliffs* in those young people who, like him, had decided to oppose dictatorship:

"This ultra-romantic and symbolic narrative has been for all of us the parable of the necessity of resistance. We read it, read it aloud to each other, understood and anticipated in it the sinking of Hitler's Reich; it was perhaps more powerful than anything that arose in emigration, because it was possible to 'have it' in Geimania. If this was possible in Germany, hope bordered on certainty."

And this is one of the most participatory and exemplary reevaluations of the Jüngerian novel within the literature of the *funere Emigra- tion*, or "internal emigration," which is the term by which literary critics indicate, lumping them together, those literati who in 1933 decided not to abandon Germany, but to oppose the dictatorship with the means at their disposal. At the end of the war some German "collaborationist" writers painfully attempted to proclaim their membership in such "internal resistance," raising the justified ire of Thomas Mann, who extended his indignation indiscriminately against all those who had remained:

"It may be superstition, but in my eyes of the books that nonetheless had a chance to come out in Germany between '33 and '45 are completely worthless, and one should not even consider them. They are all imbued with a certain odor of blood and shame; we had better send them all to the pulp. It was not permissible, it was not possible to make "culture" in Germany, while all around was happening what we know."

Thomas Mann spoke, in a letter of that period, of Jünger ungenerously as a "frosty gaiver of barbarism"; perhaps the intransigent harshness was also justified in relation to his own writings during the Great German War. very unhumanistic and warm-hearted. The animosity against Jünger on the part of Thomas Mann concealed, as we have

hinted at, the uncomfortable Mannian sympathies for a militant conservatism. The *querelle* between Thomas Mann and the writers of the *Innere Emigration* is now consigned to the record of German literary history, as is the fact that in that group-never formed, never formalized-were included authors who were radically different from each other. Jünger can be correctly approached to his brother Friedrich Georg (unknown in Italy, but worth translating and studying) and especially to Gottfried Benn. All three chose the army as an aristocratic form of emigration, as Benn expressed himself. And it is Andersch again who does justice to these protagonists of German literary civilization when he says that Ernst Junger is "the last in the great series of Mann (1875), Kafka (1883), Benn (1886), Brecht (1898)."

Other voices have also been raised for a more historically balanced understanding of the Jüngerian work. Another letter-writing rebel of our time, Bruce Chatwin, in a provocative essay, *Astheten unter Hitler*, which appeared in *The New Yorker Review of Books* on March 5, 1981, concluded by observing that Jünger "writes in a harsh, lucid prose that often leaves the reader with an impression of dandyism, of sovereign coldness and, in the end, of banality. But even the least promising pages light up at times by a flash of aphoristic brilliance, and the most harrowing descriptions are always obtained from a longing for human values in a dehumanized world."

We have now reached the core of this work, its sudden luminosity, which made Leone Traverso, one of Italy's most influential Germanists, say in 1964 that Jünger is "the greatest writer living in Germany."

*On the Marble Cliffs*, his narrative masterpiece, the most authentic symbolic novel of twentieth-century Germany, ends with the abandonment of the navy, in the grip of devastation by the sire-born hordes of the Forestar. Before embarking, the protagonist and Brother Otto lead to safety the head - consecrated by Father Lampro before his death - of Prince Sunmyra, the extreme descendant of an ancient and noble lineage, whose honor he had redeemed by sacrificing himself in the struggle against the brutal violence unleashed by the Forestaro. That relic of a prince, of a hero of aristocratic lineage, is set in the foundation stone during the rebuilding of the Navy Dome. This ritual gesture reflects the sense of tradition so alive in the German author. His work portrays poetic testimony for the continuity between the values of the past and those of the present and future, even in the different worlds even in the universe of the Anarch, even in the solitary inner cosmos of *Waldgänger*, the modern rebel. His

mythological writing enters into consonance with an annotation by Károly Kéryni that explains any attempt to approach mythological storytelling in our time: "Mythology, like Orpheus' head, continues to sing long after his death, even long after the time of his death."

Jiinger reveals himself as a cautious conveyor of precious icons, which is not reduced to the albeit useful work of preserving or restoring them with the sensitivity of Lantiquary because the writer never lost sight of the fact that those rare relics are indispensable cells in the reconstruction of the temple, of the house sacred to the mountain community.

## 2. *Evola*

Julius Evola can be considered an intellectual sodal of Jünger, not only because, born in 1898, he was roughly of the same generation, but also because their spiritual biographies run parallel, presenting significant similarities that we can recognize in the incidence that the Great War and the epochal turning point of the early postwar period had for both of them. They both lived intensely the spiritual temperament of reduicism, of that experience of camaraderie and anti-bourgeois unscrupulousness that in both of them took concrete form in artistic and intellectual engagement through a radical reckoning with bourgeois, that is, positivist, art and culture, as well as with the morbid tendencies of neo-Romantic subjectivism. Evolian Dada is paradoxically closer to the "heroic realism" of Jungian *Steel Storms* than to expressionist patheticism or D'Annunzian rhetoric. But where their destinies bring out the deepest, albeit obscure, affinities is in the fascination they both felt with esoteric culture, with the operation of inner awakening. Nigromontanus jüngeriano- master or teaching matters little- compondes to those most ascondite contactees the wayfarer on the *cinnabar Path* sought and concurred in elaborating and rooting in his destiny and vast oeuvre. The years marked by the activity of the Ur Group are those most intensely marked by an esoteric perspective of practiced magic. In the first issue of the journal C7r in 1927 an essay on hermetic operativity was published, entitled *there Hermetic Caduceus and the Mirror*, edited by an author who signs himself with the pseudonym Abraxa (behind which we wanted to see an author of Kremmertian training), which condenses precisely on that mysterious object so central to Jüngerian writing: the mirror and the lamp-gifts of Nigromontanus

are the only paraphernalia Brother Eight places in safety from the fire at the Hermitage of the Rue, as the flames devour the results of years of hard, silent research.

Alongside the esoteric suggestion, the two intellectuals also had in common an openness to the adaptation of the spiritual tradition in the new time without ever allowing themselves to be enveloped by sentimentality and nostalgia for the *fonne* assumed by the tradition in the various epochs and which they had nevertheless learned to know, research, frequent and love, without ever confusing the content with its historically conditioned coverings. *Riding the Tiger* of 1961 corresponds to a whole harvest of Jiingerian essays and interventions open to future planning: *dz\ VArbeiter* to the contributions following the European catastrophe of '45 with *Uber die Linie (Beyond the Line)* of 1950, with *Der Waldgiinger (Treatise of the Rebel)* of 1951, up to *An der Zeitmauer* of 1959, which Evola (under the pseudonym Carlo d'Altavilla) translated in 1965 under the title *At the Wall of Time*, as well as with the utopian novels *Heliopolis* of 1949 and *Eumeswil* of 1977 (the latter, however, Evola did not have time to read).

For decades Evola was concerned with Jiinger's work, of which he was one of the first Italian connoisseurs and which he helped to popularize with a 1943 essay devoted to *L'Operaio e le Scogliere di marmo*, published in *Bibliografia Fascista* (a. xviii, no. 3), and then in 1960 with a small volume of 118 pages: *L "Worker " in the Thought of Ernst Jünger for the Avio types* of Armando Armando, a well-known Roman publisher of educational texts, which housed the Evolian essay in the series "I problemi della pedagogia," volume fifty-second, directed by pedagogist Luigi Volpicelli, genti- lian, later a communist. The following year Vanni Scheiwiller published *Riding the Tiger* with a red wrapper that programmatically proclaimed "Existential Orientations for an Age in Dissolution." In both texts Evola, coming to speak of Jiinger, also distances himself from the German's work, noting in *Riding the Tiger* that the writer after *VArbeiter*: "had to pass regressively to a whole other order of ideas." 11 little 1960 volume-which is republished here- c an extensive exposition, paraphrase and commentary of *Jiinger?Jiinger's Arbeiter*, which Evola subjects to a tight critique, polemically asserting that the German writer's later activity "and quite dropped in level, both because of the prevalence of the literary and aesthetic moment, and because of the influence suffered by an order of ideas of a different, sometimes even antithetical character from those informing his early publicity: as if the spiritual charge created in him by the war and then applied to the intellectual plane, had gradually been exhausted."



This is an unappealable judgment of the most consistent Evolian intransigence. And this judgment he had insistently made clear in several articles (also published in this volume) with the 1956 review of Jünger's essay *Il nodo gordiano*, which is perhaps the most critical intervention with the ungenerous and uninformed polemic on the German debate that had prompted that reflection by Jünger. Evola denounces the "confused ideas, one-sided and questionable framings" that would characterize the German writer's works after 1945. The Evolian disappointment continues in the 1960 article for *L'Italiano*, which reviews the Jüngerian volume *To the Wall of Time*, in which the accusation for "a perceptible spiritual dislocation" and for a sorprendente openness of the German "even to motives not far from the 'democratic' or at least 'humanist' re-education of the new postwar period" returns.

More balanced, but also less focused on Jünger, is Evola's intervention regarding the German edition of *The Conservative Revolution in Germany 191 & 1932* by Armin Mohler, the Swiss scholar who was also Jünger's personal secretary after World War II. What Evola really dislikes is Jünger's literary writing, toward which he formulates harsh appreciations, leaving the German's artistic work, as he caustically expresses himself in the review regarding *To the Wall of Time*, to the "well-known cliques of literary critics and amateur intellectuals" who have "in view only those aspects of Jünger's works that fall within their horizons and that meet their tastes, aspects, which we (and, we hope, our readers as well) are instead very little interested in." <sup>11</sup> essay, however, is read with greater indulgence since "spiritually, compared to the production now mentioned, it thus represents a revival," albeit a far cry from the meditation of the early postwar period. Here it is the lifelong teacher and sapiential thinker Evola who speaks, oblivious to his youthful experience as a Dada painter and his otherwise remarkable poem of those years. One might also reflect on the 'aestheticism' of these judgments that objectively overlook the spiritual message of Jüngerian poetic metaphors. But Evola in the post-World War II period was mainly interested in Jünger's *The Worker* (although he never reconciled himself with this so "unhappy" title). In the only known letter to the German writer in 1952, in which he proposed a translation of the book to him, Evola is extremely frank, stating that of his works "those of the first period, let us say up to the 'Cliffs of Manno' are especially close to me."

This reflection leads us back to that central novel in Jüngerian production that Evola had pointed out in the 1943 article,

showing himself in this case particularly attentive to the subtle paths of the novelist's cryptic poetic writing. And indeed it was in this very essay that he had been able to appreciate the German, finding quite different tones towards the "literary and aesthetic" activity.

About *Marble Cliffs*, just published in Italy, Evola indeed observed in conclusion:

"Jünger's new book thus has profound content. A clairvoyance pervades it, superior certainly to that of the *Der Arbeiter* period, appropriate to the seriousness of these times. [...]. A fearsome destiny will not be prevented, until as a counterpart one has precisely the spiritual tradition in the highest sense, an Order not in Jünger's first merely activist-guerrilla assumption, but precisely with reference to transcendent values, to the secret ranks of something 'which is not of this earth' and which perhaps up to the present time has still been guarded."

These considerations are sharply in favor of Jünger's literary production, to that following the "activist-guerrarian" efforts, culminating in Hitler and the National Bolshevik ideology, professed until the early 1930s. The approaching doom suggests to Evola in 1943 a critically balanced assessment of the symbolic openness of the Jüngerian novel, which the German writer faithfully continued to propose, albeit with more blurred outcomes, in his post-World War II narrative works. Jünger's perspective-as, for that matter, the very decision to retire to live isolated in the woods in Wilfingen-was by then the one that most closely resembles the spiritual figure of *Waldgänger* with strong similarities to the Evolian project set forth in *Riding the Tiger* or *Orientations*, despite the criticism directed at that text.

In recent decades, Jünger's apocalyptic meditation has focused on a mythological interpretation of history in the great groove of the German tradition, the one that unites Hölderlin with Nietzsche to Heidegger. The world is now the abode of the titans, and a lacerating pain suffocates the souls of men who cannot name the longing, the sadness that veils their horizon. There is for Jünger a growing dissolution of all lyrical value: "The devils have come to inhabit the forsaken altars," The Apocalypse of the Navy had heralded the disintegration of joy in the work, yet it is precisely melancholy that foreshadows the new; the return of the gods-to use an ancient metaphor-that is, the journey of men toward the gods. Human words in the last Jünger return to be discourse on mythology with ancient figures and symbols, taken from the Tardaicity of the Hellenes,

but which turn out to be the only ones still capable of depicting the dark, confused genesis of the new. The tension is toward the most daring future constraints, toward the *Weltstaat*, the planetary state, which today already seems less absurd than when Jünger proposed it in 1960, creating at the core of that utopian proposal a tremendous dialectic between the objective structure and the indomitable spirit of the rebel, of the anarchist, which is then the distilled and sublimated figure of the twentieth-century 'adventurer that Jünger impersonated in his youth from his escape to Africa in the Foreign Legion to the heroic exploits of World War I that earned him the supreme Germanic honor. It was an extraordinary appearance, but not unique, as other writers on the venture, by land and sea, such as D'Annunzio, Hemingway, T.E. Lawrence, Malraux, and Saint-Exupéry, demonstrate.

More than thirty years after Evola's limiting judgments and in light of Jünger's consistent and secluded literary activity, always faithful to a strenuous pursuit of style, one can advance the hypothesis that Evola's appreciation of '43 is substantially fairer in the confidences of Jünger's overall work and spiritual vicissitude.

Evola and Jünger, two loners, two independent researchers, attracted by danger and insidiousness, and far from fashions, the easy suggestions of power, the seductions of the culture industry, and the temptations of easy success, remain two writers who are widely read, meditated upon and at the same time still paradoxically marginalized from current cultural discussion, which, by recovering them, can only air their critical and planning capacity. Their cultural researches are intent on tracing paths, albeit arduous and unactual ones. And in these paths they have come closer than they themselves understood and felt. To such an ideal perspective, in the most universal sense, Jünger alluded as early as 1938, writing:

"Faith in loners responds to the longing for a nameless fraternity and a deeper spiritual relationship than is possible between men."

## A letter to Ernst Jünger

Julius Evola

Rome, 17.XI. 1953

Distinguished Lord!

my name should be known to you because-perhaps thanks to the Mohler dowry-not long ago I received a specimen with dedication of "Heliopolis" and also because in the Reich we had many common acquaintances e.g. Prof. C. Schmitt and Baron von Gleichen.

For some time I have been following His activity with particular interest, often having occasion to recall His works. Of these, those from the first period, say up to the "Marble Cliffs," are especially close to me. And it is in this context that I take the liberty of addressing you. I believe I can prepare an Italian translation of "The Worker." Because of the analogy of the former with the post-World War II period, the problematic posed in that book is in my opinion relevant again. On the other hand, the solutions, which were believed to be found in the Reich and Italy between the two wars, were for the most part pseudo-solutions, surrogates and conjunctural manifestations. I believe that today the book could still exert an "awakening" effect.

Now, we have to fight an obstacle since I do not own the mentioned book and it is very difficult to get it. Dr. Mohler wrote to me that even you possess only one copy for your archives. But perhaps it is possible for you to find someone in your circle of acquaintances who can sell or lend the book-with fonnal and personal reassurance to return it after it has been examined and on occasion translated.

And also: who should one turn to for translation rights?

Sorry for this request, which nevertheless offered me the ever-postponed opportunity to have the honor of making contact with you in person as well.

With special appreciation

his devoted

J. Evola

J. Evola

197 Corso Vittorio Emanuele

Rome

Translation by Marino Freschi



The "Worker"  
in the thought of  
Ernst Jùnger



## Presentation

Ernst Junger is regarded as one of the greatest living German writers, and he is also known in Italy for several of his works that have been translated and published by major publishing houses. However, here we are mainly concerned with the books of his second period, which are literary and nonfiction in nature.

Instead, the present essay expounds and analyzes Jünger's main work of the early period, in which the echoes of his existential experiences as a multi-decorated fighter were still alive, which essentially addresses the problem of the vision and meaning of life in the modern age, and especially in the age of technology. The "Worker," for Jünger, is not a social class and even less the "proletarian worker." He is a symbol. And the symbol of a new human type capable of turning to its own advantage, of transfiguring into a spiritually formative force, all that is seemingly destructive and dangerous that the ultimate epoch presents.

Acute and accurate diagnosis of the contemporary in itself, this research is therefore far from any manner of pessimism or uncritical optimism, and is expressed with the force of the dramatic imagination of a great artist. And it is an analysis of vivid interest not only for the era in which it appeared (1932), but as relevant as ever, so much so that it can be said that, against any form of evasion from the tenacious cold war, in which the terms of "east" and "west" take on cosmic significance, Jünger points out to the most responsible men of today, to the real anti-



ghesi, the necessary path of a heroism capable of lifting them out of the state of neglect into which they seem to have plunged with the advent of the Fourth Estate, the world of the technical, the machine. A book, that is to say, that on the polemical level opposes economic materialism, the ideals of a prosperity of "bovine cattle," the bourgeoisification of the very groups that flaunt the uniform of anti-bourgeoisie, while on the constructive level it intends to affirm, albeit with sometimes inaccettabile tones, the need for an education aimed at forming a new type of man, willing to give far more than to ask, in order to overcome the crisis by which the modern world is convulsed.

In its time, Jünger's work aroused a wide resonance, and the discussion has been rekindled on the occasion of the current reprinting of that author's complete works. <sup>1</sup> problems discussed cannot fail to interest Italian audiences as well, because of the perspectives outlined both in the field of criticism and prognostication of our times, and in that of the new intellectual, ethical and spiritual categories proposed for new *élites*.

J. E.

*Rome, 1960*

This "presentation" although dated as "Rome 1960" none present in the first edition of the book published by Armando in September of that year. Since it seems unlikely that Evola Labbia drafted with that date for the second Volpe edition of 1974, it must be assumed that it had been prepared for the first, there not understood, then repropose for the second. The polemical reference to the "bourgeoisification of the same groups that flaunt the uniform of anti-bourgeoisie. i.e. certain Right-wingers of the second findings of the 1950s, would confirm this hypothesis. (Ed.).

## Introduction

In the period between the two world wars, a work came out in Germany, in two editions, that had wide resonance and provoked various discussions. It was entitled *The Worker: His Figure and Domain* (*Der Arbeiter: Gestalt und Herrschaft*) and its author was Ernst Jünger. Even then Jünger was known for several writings that, in contrast to the defeatist and pacifist literature of the early postwar period (he was called the "anti-Remarque"), emphasized the spiritual dimensions that modern warfare itself can contain. In this regard Jünger did not present himself as a mere writer. He had just finished middle school when, impatient with the stagnant bourgeois climate of his surroundings, he fled his father's home to join the Foreign Legion. The First World War broke out, he enlisted as a volunteer, was wounded seven times, and earned, for his daring and special feats that even defined an unprecedented tactic in assault actions, numerous decorations, including the highest, *l'ordre le mérite*, which he had to leave inferior officer to receive in the entire German army at the time. 1 books from the early period. *Amidst Storms of Steel* (*In Stahlgewittern*), *Combat as an inner experience* (*Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*), *The Grove* 125 (*Das Waldchen* 125), and especially *Fire and Blood* (*Feuer und Blut*) (1), reflected these directly lived experiences of Jünger,

(1) For any Italian translations, see the final bibliography (CJ ed.

Now, an intimate continuity connects this first production to the work suaccenned, *The Worker*, in the following terms: in modern warfare there is unleashed ^elemental, the elemental linked to the *material*, that is, to a system of technical means of extreme distnction ("battles of the material"). It is like a non-human force set in motion by man and from which the individual as a soldier cannot escape; he must measure himself against it, make himself an instrument of mechanicality and, at the same time, use it, stand up to it: spiritually, as well as materially. This is possible only by making oneself capable of a new form of existence, in which the eventuality of one's own destruction is also included; an eventuality, however, that ends up appearing irrelevant compared to the moments of a being totally in place and the realization of an absolute meaning of living.

These meanings, originally discovered therefore there where mechanical death reigned" in the experiences of the "battles of the material," were later extended by Jünger to life in the modern world of technology and mechanization, a world in which, in different forms, the elemental is likewise manifesting itself and destructive processes are taking place, turning almost against him, the instrument that man had created for the domination of nature, technology, in the guise of a Golem. From this world man can now no longer escape; so little, as in war with the material in action and the storms of iron and fire that he himself unleashes. The situation repeats itself: in order to cope with such a reality, created at the point of making himself lord of the earth and almost fulfilling the biblical, "Thou shalt be like God," but dissolved from him, a new human figure must take shape. It is that of one who, faced with the challenge of destruction and mechanization, responds with an absolute internal act, makes his own a new ethic and a new vision of existence. The formula that will have to extend from the life of war to the life of peace in a world that is turning toward complete motorization and mechanization is *total mobilization*, taken now in its first and foremost internal sense. In that sense it means precisely total engagement of life, being wholly in actand as a whole in act, beyond the constraints, con- ditionalities and antitheses of mere individual existence. Such an orientation, by Jünger has also been called "heroic realism."

This then is the ideal genesis of *The Worker* and the ultimate meaning of the order of ideas unfolded in it. The book had long ago struck us as a testimony of the most significant of our time. So we had divised to make it known in Italy by translating it. Indeed, to the central problem now mentioned are associated several others of no less importance, the first of which concerns the crisis of bourgeois civilization, or civilization of the Third State, and can be formulated as follows: one can recognize the

irreparable crisis of the bourgeois world, indeed greeting every attack against what remains of it and associating with the anti-bourgeois polemic, without having to end up in Marxism, having instead in view a realism and an anti-individualism of absolutely opposite sign? And in what terms can the world of technology contribute to this positive anti-bourgeois orientation, free from materialistic and "physical" premises? To which is directly associated the problem about individualism and collectivism, Personality and Impersonality, in a differentiated ideal of human formation, suited to the times in which we live and to those that are preparing. No less important is the problem of the instrumentality and limits of technique, and that of the relations between indefinite development and pure dynamism, on the one hand, and on the other the need for stability, with a view to a world in which, beyond mere movement, *Being* and *S-form* understood in that higher, almost metaphysical sense, to which we shall see the German term *Gestalt* used by Jünger correspondent. The central problem, that of the passage of life from nihilism, from the "zero point of values" (of values, it is understood, proper to the civilization in crisis), and the problem of the extent and forms in which many dissolving processes can have a cathartic value, that is, propitiate a liberation, constituting only the premise for a constructive era, is no less important, not only for the individual but also in the morphology and prognosis of history. Indeed, by this route, the perspectives that have become known to everyone through Oswald Spengler's *Sunset of the Occident* can be called into question: it is a matter of seeing whether the phenomenon of "civilization" (*Zivilisation* is, in Spenglerian terminology, the mechanical, antitraditional, cosmopolitan, rationalistic civilization dominated by the economy and the masses), the ultimate and senile phase, according to Spengler, by which the cycle of a civilization in the proper and qualitative sense (*Kultur*, in the Spenglerian sense) (2), in our case really marks an end, entails a radical break from a possible new positive cycle, or prepares for such a cycle through existential transformations that can only be stockpiled by those who have a sense of the "metaphysics" of the overall process.

If, therefore, because of the relationships that the content of Jünger's book has with such important problems, we had thought it appropriate that

(2) Keep in mind the specific sense now indicated of "civilization"<sup>(7)</sup> as opposed to "civilization" in the true, qualitative and organic sense. This Spenglerian terminology is often used by Jünger, and we will put those expressions in quotation marks when they have to be taken in the sense now indicated.

it was translated^ in rereading it after some time we became convinced that by this the purpose would not be veratnently achieved. In fact, in the book the valid parts appear mixed with others that, for a reader incapable of discrimination, would undermine them, because they are affected by local, German, yesterday's situations, and do not take into account experiences whose problematic nature has since appeared. On the other hand, *The Worker* has, so to speak, become detached from its author, Fattività successiva di cui se ha accrescenta notevolmente la sua fama (so much so that he is considered today as one of the major German writers), from the spiritual point of view it has quite dropped in level, both because of the prevalence of the literary and aesthetic moment, and because of the influence suffered by an order of ideas of a different, sometimes even antithetical character than aquelle infonnanti la sua prima pubblicistica: almost as if the spiritual charge created in him by the war and then applied to the intellectual plane, had gradually been exhausted. Moreover, Jùnger had thought about a new draft and perhaps a completion of the book, which certainly remains his fundamental work; but nothing happened, nor are we sure that, if that new draft had been carried out, valid positions would not have been undermined, given his different, more recent orientation and given a kind of *shock* he suffered, as did not a few of his compatriots even of a certain stature, because of more recent events.

This is how *L "Operaio* can be taken as a document in its own right, and in order to achieve the purpose we had in mind, we dropped the idea of a translation, switching to that of a broad summary based largely on excerpts, with separation of the ancillary and spurious parts, in order to highlight the essentials. By adding a minimum of critical and illustrative framing, we believed that this is the best way to acquaint the Italian reader with what is really interesting in all that Jùnger envisaged with regard to the substantial problems mentioned above.

And it is possible that, in relation to the modern world of technology, a certain category of readers considers the orientation of "heroic realism" to be anachronistic, that is, they do not see the need for the conversion and application in ordinary life of provisions that reflected the high-strung climate of some experiences of modern warfare. Indeed, euphoria reigns in certain circles today, and there is talk of a "second industrial revolution" that is supposed to create general conditions of well-being and easy and safe living, as opposed to everything that until yesterday many critics of our time had put on technology. In this regard, however, one cannot help but recall that a similar

euphoric climate in the sign of the progressive and humanitarian-social myth had already been formed in the period of the first "industrial revolution," with which, however, the social, political and spiritual crises of the West only ended up by racutizing. Moreover, as is well known, the bright prospects of the atomic delfèra also have the other, sinister face, connected with the warlike use of the means it offers and with the fact that even the new peace has all the characteristics of an armistice, that opposing power blocs are vying for world domination, so much so that some even indulge in apocalyptic visions of a destruction of mankind on our planet. If, therefore, it is good to consider every eventuality and if, in general, it is not convenient to lull oneself into fixations having for presupposition the idea of the essentially rational and good, rather than ambivalent, problematic and split nature of theifuomo, conceptions, such as those of *The Worker*, retain their value. That is, it is good that we also have in view the formation of a human type capable of rising to every eventuality, the extreme ones included. Nor should we forget the aspects of the problematic drawn from Jiinger, which have to do not with destruction in the proper, physical sense, but with a climate of leveling and standardization that, from what we can judge on the basis of what has already occurred, especially overseas, appears to be an inseparable part of the other perspective, the progressive and idyllic one of a technique as universal redeemer and creator of terrestrial paradises without snakes.

So as much as the formulation of the ideas of *The Worker* is affected in part by situations which, at least as far as l'Occidente (in the political sense) is concerned, are quite different from those of the moment, many points of reference retain their value: if you will, "at all eventualities," in relation, at least, to one of the possible paths that the race of our planet may also take in the times to come.



## The Figure of the Worker

### *Völkisch and limits of bourgeois civilization*

Jiinger starts with an examination of the era of the Third Estate, that is, of the bourgeoisie, highlights the apparent character of its domination, speaks of the crisis of its civilization and its basic ideas, and then goes on to describe a new human figure that he sets out to "make visible as a greatness (in the mathematical sense) in action that has already powerfully inserted itself into history and already precisely determines the structures of a transformed world." In this regard, it would be "not a matter of new ideas or a new system, but above all a new reality," to be grasped with an eye free of bias, and whose deeper revolutionary character would be given by its mere existence. The ability to recognize the new memo in existential terms of pure reality, putting aside all evaluation, actively adjusting oneself to it, will be referred to as one of the essential traits of the- attitude of "heroic realism."

The world of the Third Estate is presented as a mode of artificial and precarious superstructures, "whose domain has never been able to reach the deepest core on which the vigor and fullness of all life depend." In this era "wherever one has thought most deeply and most boldly, wherever one has felt truly vital, wherever one has been most inexorably affected, it is recognizable clear-



mind a revolt against the values exalted in the great proclamation of the independence of reason"; it is meant: in the rationalistic creed affirmed with the advent of the Third Estate, after having heralded itself choreographically with the Jacobin cult of the Goddess Reason, beyond the abstract exercises of the Encyclopedists. "Hence the exponents of that direct responsibility which is designated as genius, never were so isolated, their work and activity never were so undermined, the pure development of the heroic type never found so little nourishment. The roots had to reach far into the depths by crossing a barren clay, in order to reach the springs where that magical unity of blood and spirit resides that makes the word irresistible." "So this era was richest in great souls, restrema rebellion of which was the stifling of one's own nature; it was richest in lofty minds, to which a peace from the world of darkness seemed welcome...it was rich in battles in which it was blood, rather than spirit, that proved itself in victories and defeats." "Honor to these fallen, broken by the atrocious loneliness of love or knowledge, or whom steel crushed on the red-hot heights of combat!" says Jiinger

First and foremost, the bourgeois world is characterized by a special concept of freedom, by that of an abstract, general, individualistic freedom: "a form fixed in itself, empty of all content, which can be applied to any size." It is Topposto of the idea, destined to be taken up, "that the freedom a force has at its disposal is exactly proportionate to the magnitude of the task assigned to it, and that the breadth of freedom without constraints corresponds to that of the responsibility that justifies it and gives it value." The bourgeois knows "freedom *from* something," not "freedom *for* something" (it is, this, a well-known distinction already found in Nietzsche); he does not know about the world in which "freedom manifests itself in its most mighty forms only when it is interpenetrated by the consciousness of *being granted in feudal* he does not know of "that obedience which is an art of hearing, and of that order which means to be ready for the word, to be ready for the command which like a thunderbolt runs from the top down to the roots"; he ignores the situations in which "one recognizes who is leading by his being the first servant, the first soldier, the first worker"; he does not know, finally, that "the conditions for maximum power are present, when there are no longer any doubts about who is to lead and who is to follow."

Unity of freedom and service, of liberty and order: "the Third State era has never known the wonderful force of this unity because to it joys too easy and too human seemed the only ones worthy of being sought." The counterpart of the abstract idea, individua-

listic, privatistic idea of freedom is the societal idea, the system determined by the principle of the social contract. It is proper to the bourgeois to dissolve all organic unity, to "transform every commitment based on responsibility into a contractualistic relationship susceptible to revocation," based, precisely, on the aforementioned concept of abstract freedom. For associated living, the specific and valid category of bourgeois mentality is that of "society," as opposed to the properly political category of "state": therefore, the state is conceived in terms of "society." In this regard, Jünger refers to a doctrine that is quite consistent in German political writers; it concerns precisely the antithesis that is thought to exist between systems having "society" as their fundamental point of reference and ideal and those that instead have the "State" as their basis and ideal: the State being understood here as a raised principle in itself real, not referable to the simple empirical and utilitarian associative facts of the inorganic and atomic mass of individuals that it comprises.

Thus in bourgeois civilization everything is conceived in terms of "society," against a rationalistic and moralizing background. The subtlest means are put in place for every greatness to be brought back to such a form. At the limit, as a "society" is conceived the total population of the earth itself, "presented theoretically as an ideal humanity whose division into states, nations or races would be based on an error: an error, however, which will be eliminated with the passage of time thanks to treaties, to a work of enlightenment of minds, to civilization or, finally, more simply still, thanks to the development of the means of transportation and communication."

In particular, "the bourgeois knows only defensive warfare, which is as good as to say that he does not know war at all, and this already due to the fact that his nature excludes any warrior element.... And even when he for an obvious utility calls the soldier to his aid or disguises himself as a soldier, he will never give up the claim that he does so only to defend himself, or, if he can give to understand it, only to defend u- inanity."

The most valuable discovery of the bourgeois mentality, which at the same time "constituted the inexhaustible object of a corresponding artistic imagination," was thus a "strange and abstract image of man": the individual. However, in practice, "the individual sees against himself the mass, which is his exact reflection" "Mass and individual are the two sides of the same coin," in essence they are one and the same. They are the two poles, only seemingly opposite, of "society." And "from such unity has resulted the astonishing, twofold spectacle offered to us throughout a century:

on the one hand, the most chaotic anarchy, on the other the prosaic corporate ordering of democracy." With which Jünger takes up another well-known motif of traditionally oriented political thought: at the point where the abstract concept of freedom transforms the concrete person into an atom, reduces him to an individual, to a numerical unit, dissolving him from any organic nexus, contrapuntally and dialectically arises as the inevitable counterpart the mass, the pure realm of quantity. We shall therefore see that, according to Jünger, the crisis of bourgeois civilization would equally affect both poles of it, both the individual and the mass, and that new categories would be destined to assert themselves beyond the one and the other.

The contractualist conception of social unity means that the regime preferred by the bourgeois, the regime, indeed, that he feels to be essential for his and his orders' subsistence, is that of discussions, transactions and negotiations. As long as there is the possibility of discussion and negotiation, the bourgeois is safe; and by this means he intends to eliminate what is dangerous for the whole system that can arise from conflicts within "society," that is, from class conflicts. He knows how to reaffirm the principle of "society" even against the apparent attacks against it, by making sure that they always take their starting point from that principle and its concept of freedom; and every seizure of power ends up presenting itself as a particular modification of the social contract. In opposition to the virile nature of the state, "the feminine nature of 'society' betrays itself in its seeking not to eliminate but to absorb everything antithetical to it. Wherever it encounters an opposing need with definite features, its subtlest method of subornation consists in presenting it as an expression of its concept of freedom, thus legitimizing it before the forum of its basic law: which is tantamount to paralyzing it."

It has been mentioned that this whole system for Jünger starts from the ideas of rationality and morality; in addition, there is the idea of security, with the effort to exclude "elemental" and the dangerous from the living space: an essential point, the latter, in the overall conception of *The Worker*. However, another concomitant element is not overlooked, namely, the sovereignty that economic thought exercises in the bourgeois area. "11 attempt at an arithmetic aimed at transforming destiny into a magnitude solvable by calculation...can be traced back to the time when atOhaïti and in the Ile de France the original type of the reasonable and virtuous, and yet happy, man was discovered, to the time when the spirit began to concern itself with the duty on grains and mathematics was one of the favorite pastimes with which the aristocracy delighted on the eve of its end. At that time

a model was sought to which a precise economic interpretation was then given, as the claim to freedomria part deirindividual c of the masses was presented as an economic claim within an economic world." Here "the rationalistic and moralizing ideal coincides with a utopian conception, cd it is to economic instances that every problem goes to refer." This is an important point, in order to understand what Jünger is aiming at: because by bringing any upheaval brought about by simple economics into the ideal area of the civilization of the Third Estate, one points to the only apparently revolutionary, hence irrelevant, character of any social revolutionary dialectic as conceived by the leftists themselves, and postulates a different space for the figure that, according to Jünger, would characterize the new era. "It is inevitable that in this world of exploiters and exploited no greatness is possible which does not have the economic fact as its last resort. Two species of men, of arts, of morals are indeed contrasted, but one does not need to have much acumen to realize that unique c the source that feeds them. So c also from tm same kind of progress that the protagonists of the economic struggle derive their justification. They meet in the fundamental claim that each is the true advocate of social prosperity, whereby each c convinced that he can undermine the positions of his opponent when he succeeds in challenging any right to present himself as such." Jünger concludes, "There is no need to pause further on all this, because any participation in the discussion would be worthwhile not to put an end to it but to prolong it indefinitely. To be recognized, then, is a dictatorship of economic thought taken in itself, such as to reassert itself over every other possible dictatorship and to limit all that it can foster. Indeed, within such a world there is no possible movement that does not go to agitate the filthy mota of material interests, nor is there any position, starting from which a breakthrough can come... Whichever of the two parties secures dominance, it will always depend on theTe- conomy as on a higher power." At the same time, this important point is made clear: "By denying the economic inundation as that which determines life, that is, as a destiny, one wants to contest its *rank*, not already its existence. It is not a matter of advocating an estrangement of the spirit from all economic struggle; indeed, it may be well that the economic struggle "take on an extreme harshness." But "it must not be the economy that dictates the laws of play," this must "be ordered to a higher law of struggle." Overcoming the bourgeois world requires "the declaration of independence of a new man from the economic world," a declaration that "will not mean the renunciation of that

world but rather its subordination to the claim of exercising a higher dominion."

For now, however, this whole order of ideas is carried out by Jünger for the sole purpose of illustrating that the reduction of every revolutionary instance to the economic sphere, exhausting it in it, is one of the techniques used to keep the principle of "society" alive, to reconfirm, in spite of everything, the world of the Third Estate. It would remain to be seen within what limits such ideas of Jünger are accurate. To us, the "demon of the economy" (the myth à<sup>l</sup>*Thomo oeconomicus*: "the economy is our destiny") seems to be the transition point between the world of the Third Estate and the world of the Fourth Estate. As a "category," economics certainly belongs to bourgeois thought, and the transformation (or interpretation) of the old traditional organic social articulations (castes, orders, *coipi*: this is what is included in the German term difficult to translate, and often used by Jünger, *Stände*) into simple economic classes is certainly a feature of bourgeois civilization. However, it is visible and evident that through the economy "elemental" forces have been aroused, which in many areas are beyond the control of the bourgeois, and which are sometimes the substratum of new, collectivist units.

### *The irruption of the elemental into bourgeois space*

This indeed leads to aspects of the crisis of the bourgeois world, to study which, according to Jünger, one must turn one's attention to that trait of the bourgeois that corresponds to his ideal of comfortable security and the exclusion of the elemental from his life.

11 concept of the elemental plays a central part in Jünger's book. As in other German writers, the term "elemental" here is not used in the sense of the primitive; rather, it designates the deeper powers of reality, which fall out of intellectualistic and moralistic structures and are characterized by a transcendence, whether positive or negative, with respect to the individual: as when one speaks of the elemental forces of nature. In the inner world, they are those powers that can break into both personal and collective life from a deeper psychic layer. When Jünger speaks of the exclusion of the elemental from the bourgeois world, it is clear that he is associating himself with the polemic carried out by various contemporary currents, from irrationalism, intuitionism and the religion of life to psychoanalysis and existentialism; against the hitherto predominant rationalistic-moral image of man. We shall see, however, how the posi-

zation of Jünger has an original character; he conceives of active, lucid, non-regressive forms of man's relations with the elemental, which differentiates him from the problematic orientation proper to most of the tendencies now mentioned.

The constant concern of the bourgeois world was thus "to hermetically close off the living space to the irruption of the elemental," to "create for itself a security belt in front of it." Precisely, security in life was the requirement of that world, which the cult of reason was to consolidate and legitimize: of a reason, "for which everything elementary is identical with the absurd and the senseless." To include Elementary in existence, with all that is problematic and risky it may imply, this to the bourgeois appeared an inconceivable thing, that is, an abettment to be prevented by appropriate pedagogical techniques. Says Jünger: "The bourgeois never feels impelled to measure himself against destiny in struggle and danger, because Elementary falls out of his ideal world; it is for him the irrational, therefore undoubtedly the immoral. He will therefore always try to keep it at a distance, whether it appears to him in the species of power and passion, or whether it manifests itself in the forces of nature, in fire, water, earth, Laria. From the latter point of view, the great cities that arose at the beginning of the century appear to us as the citadels of security, as the triumph of walls, which have long since ceased to be the antiquated ones of fortified walls, and which like stone, asphalt and glass now surround life, in honeycomb-like structures, penetrating almost to the innermost textures of it. Here every achievement of technology is a triumph of convenience, and every entry of the elements is regulated by economy."

For Jünger, however, the character of the anomaly of the bourgeois era lies not so much in the pursuit of comfort "as in the specific trait associated with that tendency: in the fact, that the elemental presents itself as the absurd and that therefore the enclosing walls of bourgeois Lordernity simultaneously present themselves as the enclosing walls of rationality." This is where Jünger's anti-bourgeois polemic comes in. He distinguishes between rationality and the cult of reason, and disputes that a strict order and formation of life is possible and conceivable only according to the rationalistic scheme, starting with a waterproofing of existence in the face of the elemental. Among the tactics used by the bourgeois is precisely that of "presenting every attack against the cult of reason as an attack against reason itself, so that it can be banished to the domain of the irrational." The truth, on the other hand, is that only according to the bourgeois view, that is, only on the basis of "the specifically bourgeois conception of reason, characterized by its irreconcilability.

lity with Ixlementary," the one attack can identify with the other. This antithesis cannot be held valid by a new human type: for that matter, it is in fact superseded by figures "such as, for example, that of the believer, the warrior, the artist, the navigator, the hunter, the worker, and even the delinquent," all figures for whom, even apart from the last, the bourgeois has a pity or less open aversion because, "as it were, already in their garments they carry within the cities the odor of the dangerous, because already by their mere presence they represent an instance against the cult of reason."

But "for the warrior, battle is an affair in which a supreme order is realized; for the poet, the most tragic conflicts are situations in which the meaning of life can be grasped in a particularly clear way"; in delinquency itself, a lucid rationality can be expressed; "the believer participates in the more extensive sphere of a life full of meaning. Whether by misfortune and danger or by miracle, fate inserts him directly into a pity mighty affair. The gods love to manifest themselves in the elements, in the fiery stars and lightning, in the bush that flame does not consume." Rather, the decisive point to be recognized is that "man can stand with the element in relations of both higher and lower kinds, and that manifold are the planes on which both safety and danger fall into the order. Instead, in the bourgeois man must be seen who as the supreme value recognizes only safety, determining his conduct of life on the basis of this." "The conditions for security that progress seeks to achieve are bound up with the universal dominance of bourgeois reason, which should not only limit but ultimately destroy the sources of the dangerous. It is to come to such a point that, in the light of reason, the dangerous is presented as the irrational, so as to take away all right to be part of reality. It is very important, in such a world, to see the absurd in the dangerous: this seems to be eliminated at the point where in the mirror of reason it appears as an error."

"In both the spiritual and objective orders of the bourgeois world, one can see this," Jünger continues, "In a large way, it can be seen in the tendency to conceive of the state, which is essentially based on hierarchy, in terms of society, that is, of a form which has equality as its fundamental principle and which has been constituted by an act of reason. It reveals itself in the overall organization of a security system that should apportion all risk not only in the field of domestic and foreign political life but also in that of individual life, in the tendency to dissolve fate through a calculation of probabilities. Finally, it reveals itself in the multiple, complex attempts-

ti vi to bring the life of the soul back to relations of cause and effect, so as to transfer it from the domain of the unpredictable to that of the calculable, and thus to place it in the sphere illuminated by external consciousness." In all fields, the tendency c to avoid conflicts, to demonstrate inevitability of conflicts. And since these in spite of everything intervene, for the bourgeois "Tiimportantc is to demonstrate that they are an error of which the e- ducation or Tillumination of minds will have to prevent the recurrence."

All this would be a world of shadows, however, and the Enlightenment would overestimate its strengths in believing that it could hold itself together. In reality, "the dangerous is always present; like an element of nature it continually seeks to break the dam with which order closes it, and by the laws of an occult but infallible mathematics, it becomes all the more threatening and deadly the more the order seeks to exclude it. Indeed, it is meant to be not only an element of that order, but rather the principle of a higher security, which the boi^hese can never know." Generally speaking, while it may be possible to exclude Tele mentary from a given kind of existence, "to this certain laws are laid down, because the elemental exists not only in the external world but is also inseparable from the life of every individual." Man lives in the elemental both as c a natural being and as a being moved spiritually by deep forces. "No syllogism will ever be able to replace the beating of the heart or the activity of the kidneys, nor are there any greatnesses, starting from reason itself, that from time to time do not subject themselves to the passions, noble or ignoble." Finally, referring to the economic world, Jünger notes that "no matter how beautiful the way in which calculations are set up, the only result of which should be happiness, there still remains a residue that eludes all analysis and that human beings feel because of a feeling of impoverishment and growing despair."

The elemental therefore has a dual source. "On the one hand, it has its source in a world that is always dangerous, just as the sea conceals danger in itself even when it is not moved by a breath of wind. On the other, its sources are to be found in the human soul, which yearns for play and adventure, love and hate, triumphs and falls, feels the need for risk no less than for security; to it an absolutely secure state appears, with good reason, as a state of *incompleteness*." It is quite evident, however, that contali words Jünger is already referring to a human type different from the one from which the bourgeois world has taken its cue, and which, in turn, such a world breeds.

the dominance of bourgeois values can thus be measured "by the distance to which the elemental seems to have withdrawn from existence."

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Jiinger says "it seems," because the elemental, making use of many masks, finds a way to lurk at the very center of the bourgeois world, undermines its rationalizing orders and emerges at every crisis of it. For example, it is noted how bloody connubialities between the bourgeoisie and power have already been characteristic in the past under the sign of the French Revolution. The dangerous and the elemental have reasserted themselves "even in the face of the subtlest ruses with which they have tried to circumvent them; indeed, they introduce themselves unpredictably into these very ruses, in order to draw disguises from them, which makes everything that is civilization [in the bourgeois sense] have an ambiguous face; the relations existing between idealistic universal brotherhood and patibolito human rights and massacres are known to everyone." Not that it was the bourgeois himself who wanted such contradictory situations, for when he speaks of rationality and morality he takes himself terribly seriously: "the whole thing was rather a terrible sarcastic laughter of nature at the masks in terms of morality, a frenzied exultation of blood against intellect after the prelude of fine speeches had ended." What deserves to be noted instead is "the ingenious juggling of concepts by which the bourgeois tries to see his virtues reflected everywhere and to take away from the words all that is hard and necessary so that a morality shines through them that everyone is bound to recognize." For example, this is evident on the international level, "whether it is to present the conquest of a colony as a peaceful penetration or as a civilizing work, the incorporation of a province of another nation as an effect of the free self-decision of the peoples or, finally, the robbery exercised by the victor as reparations." It is obvious that cotemplification of Jünger could be facilitated augmented with facts proper to more recent times. Among the most typical cases could be mentioned the new "crusades," the courts of the victors, the so-called "aid to underdeveloped countries," and so on.

In this same order of ideas, what Jünger says is also accurate, when he notes that in the very era in which the bourgeois values of "civilization" have been officially and noisily banished, we have witnessed events that would no longer have been believed possible in an enlightened world: phenomena of violence and cruelty, organized crime, unleashing of instincts, massacres. They represent "the reduction to absurdity of the utopia of bourgeois security." As a good example, Jünger points to the consequences that Prohibition already had in America: a moralizing attempt that, promoted by a literature of social utopianism, seemed convincing as a measure of security; it actually only served to stir up elemental forces of the lowest level.

Wherever the state, rigidly following the bourgeois principle, relies on abstract rational and moralizing categories, and excludes the elemental, it actually causes the latter to operate outside of it. "*Amoral* and the *rational* not being primordial laws but merely laws of the abstract spirit," says Jünger, "any authority or domination that wants to be based on them is only apparent, and in the corresponding area bourgeois security is not slow to reveal its utopian and ephemeral character." It would be difficult to dispute the reality of this dialectic even in the period after *The Worker* was written. Bound up with it is one of the main factors in the crisis of the bourgeois world and the other, formless, dark and dangerous face of modern societal structures ordered and regulated only on the surface, lacking both superordinate meaning and roots in the deeper psychic strata.

Already when *The Worker* was written, after World War I, it had become clear how a similar backlash phenomenon had been caused on the international level by the application of similar principles, particularly the bourgeois concept of abstract freedom: insofar as the principle of national democracy was accorded universal and indiscriminate validity, it contributed to a state of world anarchy by creating new causes of crisis in the ancient order, as in the revolt of the colonial peoples and of all the forces to which, in Europe and outside, the 1 principle of the self-determination of peoples gave political sovereignty even when it was a matter of strains and populations, says Jünger, "the names of which were known to us not through political history but at most through the manuals of ethnology. Of this the natural consequence is the penetration of purely elemental currents, of forces belonging less to history than to natural history, into political space." Today all this appears accurate to an even higher degree.

For us, however, it is more important to examine the crisis of the system in its spiritual aspects. Jünger speaks first of all of forms of defense or compensation already manifested in the margins of bourgeois society with the Romantic phenomenon. "There are periods in which every relation of man to the elemental manifests itself in romantic propensities in which a fracture point is already concealed. It depends on one or the other circumstance that this rupture also becomes visible, in a losing oneself in distances, in drunkenness, in madness, in misery or in death. These are all forms of an escape in which the individual, after searching in vain for a way out in the whole area of the spiritual or material world, surrenders arms. Sometimes, however, capitulation can also have the appearance of an attack, as when an already sinking warship blindly fires one last broadside."

"We were able to recognize the value of the sentinels who fell on lost positions," Jünger continues. "Many are the tragedies to which great names are attached, but there are also anonymous ones, in which entire groups, entire social strata, lacked Faria necessary to life, as if a gust of toxic gas had hit them." What our author adds also has an autobiographical basis, reflecting those youthful experiences of his we mentioned at the beginning: "11 bourgeois had almost succeeded in persuading the adventurous heart (1) that danger does not exist, that an economic law governs the world and history. But to the young men who abandoned their father's house at night in the fog, Fin- timo hear said that they must go far away in search of danger, across the ocean, to America, to the Foreign Legion, to the countries where the pepper tree grows. Thus arose figures who hardly had the courage to express themselves in their own, superior language, be it that of the poet who feels similar to the petrel whose mighty wings created for the storm become only the object of an importunate curiosity in a foreign environment c without wind, be it that of the born warrior, who seems like a good-for-nothing because the merchant's life fills him with disgust."

The decisive point of the rupture, however, came with World War I. "In the joy with which the volunteers Fhanno greeted (writes Jünger, visibly referring to what he himself experienced) there was more than the feeling of liberation of hearts to which suddenly a new, more dangerous life was revealed. There was also concealed in it a revolutionary protest against ancient values that had irretrievably expired. From this point on, a new, elemental color was infused into the current of thoughts, feelings and events." The important thing, however, is to see how, by the very force of things, a new way of being also began to differentiate itself here. Jünger notes the part that in the fighting youth, taken as a whole, had equally enthusiasms, ideals and values of a conventional patriotism reconnected to the bourgeois world. But it soon became clear that the war required reserves of forces quite different from those nurtured by such sources; according to the same difference that there was between the feelings of enthusiasm of the troops when they departed from stations c "their actions among the craters, iron and fire of a battle of the material." Then, as at a trial by fire, appeared the terms in which the protest

(i) Cf. Femori imo Jüngerian writing: *H adventurous heart*, Guanda. Cream, 1994 (ed.).

Romanticism had a justification. Such protest "is condemned to nihilism where, to be an escape, a polemic against a sinking world, it still remains conditioned by it. It becomes a force only when it gives rise to a special kind of heroism." Here the central theme of *The Worker* is announced: crossing a zone of distinction without being distracted. The same experience in the same generation had completely opposite effects; "some felt broken by it, others participated in a health they had never known before, thanks to the proximity with death, with fire, with blood." The gap, here, is constituted by having had as their only support the bourgeois values, which are based on the individual and the exclusion of the elemental, or the Tesseract been capable of a new freedom. For the first case, Jünger could well have referred to the words that E.M. Remarque put at the head of his famous *In the West nothing new* (2): "This book is not meant to be either an accusation or the demonstration of a thesis; it only means to say what a generation was, broken by the war even when the shells have spared it." For the other case, an anticipation of what will be called the "type" comes into question: a man who holds himself up because he makes himself capable of an active character relationship with the elementary, parallel to higher forms of lucidity, consciousness and self-dominance, disindividualization and realism, because he knows the pleasure of absolute prestations, of a maximum of action with a minimum of "for what?" and "to what end?" Here "the lines of pure force and mathematics meet"; in the area of heightened consciousness "an unexpected, as yet unexperienced empowerment of the raw means and energies of life is made possible."

"In the occult centers of force, by virtue of which one dominates the sphere of death, one encounters a new humanity, formed through the new exigencies," says Jünger "In this landscape only with great difficulty can one still discern the individual, the fire has calcined there everything that does not have an objective character." The processes that take place there are such that any attempt to tune them still to the romanticism and idealism of the individual undoubtedly ends in absurdity. To overcome victoriously "a couple of hundred meters where mechanical death reigns," abstract moral or spiritual values, freewill, culture, enthusiasm or the blind thrill of contempt for danger are not enough. A new and precise energy is required, while "the strength

(2) Published in 1929, it also became famous through a film. Also known by the titles *In the West Nothing New* or *Nothing New on the Western Front* - C with the latter being the last reprinted by Mondadori in 1986 (Ed.).

combative in the whole affair takes on a less individual than functional character." Moreover, one discovers correspondences between the point of destruction and spiritual Tàpice of an existence; and here arise presentiments of the absolute person. Relations with death are transformed and "destruction can seize the individual in those precious moments when a maximum of vital and spiritual commitment is required of him." Then "in the end may also be recognized the highest freedom." All this becomes a natural part, desired in advance, of a new way of life Finally, "images of a supreme discipline of the heart and nerves, evidence of an extreme, lucid, almost metallic coldness, in which the heroic consciousness knows how to use the body as a pure instrument, imposing on it a series of complex actions beyond the 'instinct of con- servation,' are presented. Among the flames of a stricken airplane, in the air chambers of a sunken submarine, work is still being done that, properly speaking, transcends the sphere of life and of which no communiqué will ever give news." The two terms that come together in this "type" are thus the elemental in action in itself and outside itself, and discipline, extreme rationality and objectivity, an absolute abstract control in the total activation of one's being.

Thus it is that, according to Jünger, already in the course of the First World War a new "inner form" is heralded, and we have already said that in it he sees what, apart from the warlike extrinsications and the mentioned, exceptional culminations, will be decisive for a humanity in the making. The ultimate crisis of the bourgeois world and of all ancient values, for Io Jünger is due to the civilization of technology and the machine, with all the forms of elementariness that attach to it. Substantially identical would be the type of the one who spiritually is not the vanquished but the victor, whether on modern battlefields or in an absolutely technicalized world. Substantially identical would be the kind of overcoming and inner training that in both cases c required. This is how the figure of the one whom Jünger calls the worker, *der Arbeiter*, is delineated, and whom an ideal continuity would unite "with the true, invincible soldier of the great war."

### *The concept of work*

Let us say at the outset: the choice of the term "worker" to designate what we are dealing with in Jünger was not a happy one. It can easily give rise to misunderstanding, although proponents warn at once that in the course of

of the exposition the meaning attributed to it undergoes considerable changes, and that the reader of these will have to take them into account.

The Jùngerian Worker does not identify himself with the social stratum to which this designation is habitually referred. The "labor" that defines him includes, yes, the activities corresponding to the modern *fonne* of production and domination of matter, *ina* also transcends them and expresses a general mode of being. The *funger* at one point even speaks, Kantianly, of a non-empirical but "intelligible" (noumenal) character of labor, and then, explicitly and repeatedly, of a "metaphysics" of it. In the age of work, he says, there is nothing that cannot be conceived under species of work. Work "c the attacking and holding on to lost positions" no less than producing. Work is "the speed of the fist, of thought, of the heart, of day and night life, science, love, art, faith, worship, war: work is the vibration of the atom and the force that moves the stars and solar systems." ^"Worker" c an unprecedented figure that imbues every extrinsic of existence with new meaning, as at other times happened, for example, with the figure of the knight and chivalric sentiment. In general, as work in the sense of Jiinger can be understood the category of "being in act," with relation to a human type characterized by active, inattentive, efficient relations with the pure, objective forces of reality, by a new union with the elemental in itself and outside itself. However, there also remains a specific reference to the modern world of technique, a favorite formula of Jùnger's being that "technique c the way in which the figure of the worker mobilizes the world," and the final state being associated with total technicalization and motorization, albeit with a view less to material achievements than to the function of command, of being in act, dominating one's creature and work, to which nature bends. Therefore, here "work" appears as an autonomous greatness, not derivative, not subordinate to economics, politics and culture; it is valid as a mode of being, which is not that of the? *omo faber* simply, but of one who feels that he is in being and participates in being insofar as it is absolutely in being. This is how, as we shall see, two degrees of work are also distinguished, corresponding, in Jiinger's terminology, to the "special character" and the "total character" of it. In its special (or rather, specialized) aspects, labor undergoes the conditionality of its object; in its total aspect it has the indivisible quality of a single mode of being, and refers to the whole.

After all, that Jiinger's *Toperaio* is not an economic greatness could already be inferred from what our author said about the economy and the impossibility of coming to a breakthrough-

mento c to a true overcoming of the bourgeois space, starting from it. Thus he is also keen to point out that as much as in the industrial worker one must recognize a particularly tempered human type, "whose existence has helped to demonstrate in a clear way the impossibility of continuing to live in the old forms," even to refer only to that type "would be to discern not the figure but one of its particular manifestations." The Jùngerian worker does not constitute a class in the sense of the revolutionary dialectic of the 19th century; even less does he correspond to the proletariat, to the "type of the bourgeois without colletto." It does not identify with a Fourth Estate. After all, "class" for Jùnger is nothing but a bourgeois category, c in the attempt to have the revolutionary worker demands conceived in class finality, s indicates an expedient the bourgeois has used to try to bring back into his world and into the framework of "society" the exponents of a new humanity, in a regime of transactions, compromises and bargaining. Jùnger says that of the worker there was indeed an attempt to "make the object of a new sentimentality, different from the previous one only in its greater meanness." And, "in anyone who is able to see clearly, there will remain only amazement in realizing how it was believed to undermine the bourgeois world by affirming the very instances that most uniquely consolidated it," that is, economic instances, class claims based on an extension of the concept of bourgeois freedom. There where the worker in the current sense embodies the worker in the Jùngerian sense, there is instead the emergence of a new reality, revolutionary not because of its characters of rebellion and antitheticity, but because of its essential *diversity* from pre-existing forms c values. Essential should be not "reaction to an oppression but a new sense of responsibility." Then one could recognize "disguised gentlemen's movements" in what the bourgeois regarded as slave movements, both when he opposed them and when he went along with them.

All this confirms, then, that the term "Worker" in Jùnger has a very special meaning. And even when the reference does not exclude the same type as the modern worker, one must keep in mind what Jùnger says about "the necessity of such an attitude as to make one worthy of attributing to oneself the title of worker," as opposed to the bourgeoisification of that type. This point seems important to us. For if one abstracts from the situations, not sufficiently known to us, peculiar to the Soviet-communist area, it stands that today in the "free countries" Marxist propaganda is based on the prospect of the worker's goal of a bourgeois standard of living, that is, complete accession to those com-

dity c at that economic-social level so privileged that until yesterday they were precluded to the type of the worker as exploited and dispossessed; the driving force of that propaganda does not proceed at all from the idea of different c antithetical forms of life, which may even entail greater hardships, greater commitment, greater activation of one's being, starting from a different meaning of existence. At the same time, in the non-Communist countries of the Occident, especially in America, laborghesization of the worker and his aspirations is very visible and in continuous development, in the mora constituted by the current situation of economic conjuncture ed provisional international political equilibrium. Per on the other hand, the Jüngerian worker rejects the ideals of bourgeois existence, he does not avoid the hard and even risky life, he is ready to accept it, he has in himself a style of total and disindividual commitment. Realization of the absolute person, this is, perhaps, the most suitable formula per the supreme forms of work as Jünger conceives it. We shall see that the summit of the Jüngerian world of work lies in the sign of a new existential wholeness, "beyond the oppositions of idea and matter, of blood and spirit, of individual and collectivity, of power c right." The worker discovers that "life and culture make one" c that "there are things far more important than principle and end, life and death." These are the basic themes best defined by the formula of "heroic realism," "far from both materialism and idealism."

### *The doctrine of figure*

Jünger speaks of the new type as a figure, *Gestalt*. In the special meaning in which it is used here, this term is taken from the organic, or wholeness (*Ganzheitslehre*) philosophy. The principle of this doctrine, which has various exponents in Germany, is that "the whole is more than the sum of its component parts," and in it the "figure" is given the meaning of a primordial type or archetype, almost of a Platonic idea, which creates its own living form in visible space "like a seal its imprint." Says Jünger that the bourgeois world "had no relation to the world of figures. It unpacked everything into ideas, into concepts or mere phenomena, c of this fluid space the poles were reason and sentimentality." In the new world, one will instead return to thinking as a function of figure. Only then can "beings be known in all the richness and unity of their life." Figures are not historically conditioned; instead they condition history, which is the scene of their manifestation, of their succession,



meet or struggle. "History does not produce the figures but changes with the figure." It is the appearance of a figure that gives every civilization its imprint. Figures do not become, do not evolve, are not the products of empirical processes, of horizontal relations of cause and effect. Since they are pure modes of existentiality, moral and aesthetic values cannot be applied to them. Their value is their reality. Their every appearance results in a revolution *sans phraxes*, silent and irresistible, says Jùnger. Who writes: "The individual finds himself embedded in a great hierarchy of figures, of powers that can never be conceived real enough, plastic enough, necessary enough. Before them, he becomes a symbol, a representative, and the power, richness and meaning of his life depend on the extent to which he participates in the order and struggle of the figures." "One recognizes authentic figures by the fact that one can consecrate all one's energies to them, that they can become the object of both supreme worship and extreme hatred. Since they contain in themselves the whole, they also demand the whole. Hence man together with the figure discovers his own destination, his own destiny, and it is this discovery that makes him capable of sacrifice, of a sacrifice whose most significant expression is that of blood." "As a figure, Tuomo c more than the sum of his energies and faculties, he is more profound than he can believe himself to be in his deepest cogitations, he is more powerful than he can demonstrate in his greatest undertakings." Junger adds, "The embodiment of a figure promises nothing; at most, it is a sign that life is again in an ascending phase, has a rank and new symbols are being created."

In essence, in that of the figure we can thus discern a strengthening of the concept of the "person," as opposed to the individual-atom. For Jùnger, it leads to "a new and more daring life, to the destruction of the values of the detached spirit that has become sovereign and of the pedagogy applied to man during the bourgeois era," to a "revision of life on the basis of being," to the "certainty that the instances of abstract justice, of free inquiry, of artistic consciousness must be justified by an instance superior to all those that, in general, can be conceived in the world of bourgeois freedom."

The "Worker," for Junger, has this rank of "figure." The world of technology announces the new figure, T "Worker"; this is its basis and justification, and it tends to create its own type to incarnate itself according to a necessary process. As a worker, Tuomo, conceives himself as a figure in a hierarchy of figures. And it will appear that, like any other, the figure of the worker "finds itself embedded in being in a deeper and calmer way than all the symbols and orders from which it can draw

confirms, more deeply than buildings and works, men and their communities, which are like the changing features assumed by a face which remains identical in its fundamental character."

Thus the figure doctrine, *Gesall*, can be called the "metaphysics" of the world of the 'worker.

### *"The Worker and the Superman*

The influence on Jünger of the thought of Frederick Nietzsche is quite visible, in fact, even in the historical framework for our author: the new era would be prepared by two processes, converging despite their apparent contradiction, that is, "both by the extreme enhancements of the individual such as were already for some time presented in the superman, and by those societies living as anthills under the sign of labor, in the framework of which the claim to a form of its own appears as an illegitimate expression of private life." Therefore, it will be appropriate to mention the actual relations that Jünger's overall conception has with the Nietzschean one.

The common trait of superman and "Worker" is that both have behind them "the zero-point of values" (meaning: of bourgeois values). However, the superman finds himself in a dead-end street. Jünger recognizes that the corresponding Nietzschean doctrine of the will to power represented a decisive revolution in our culture. Senonché practically "life could not have paused more than a moment in their atmosphere, stronger and purer, but aneli and mortal, of a panarchical space if it had not immediately afterwards thrown itself into the most impetuous tide as an exponent of a specific will to power, having its own ends." Then "the problem of *justification*, of a special, non-arbitrary, necessary relation of the man to power, also definable as a task, imposes itself. It is this justification that makes a being appear no longer as an elemental force but as a historical force." For Jünger, "a power in the abstract exists as little as a freedom in the abstract." The degree of justification is also that of "sovereignty" (*Herrschaft*) attainable by the will to power, by sovereignty itself. Jünger "a state in which the unlimited space of power is referred to a point, in function of which it appears as the space of right." "On the other hand, the pure will to power is as little justified as the mere will to believe; it is not a feeling of fullness, but of deprivation, that is expressed in these two attitudes into which Romanticism is divided." It can be said that in the type of the worker,

superman c will to power lose their anarchic, nihilistic and individualistic dimensions; c but the corresponding "elemental" dimension is preserved, but within the framework of precise, impersonal, objective forms of extrinsicity. Indeed, the final point of reference for the Jünger will be a debordine world c of being, not of formless power.

Jünger recognized that the orientation of the superman does not end nclTpisode constituted by Nietzschean philosophy. He finds it "in the history of geographical and cosmographical discoveries, in those inventions whose reposed meaning is a will to omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, the most reckless of *eritis sicut Deus*," he also finds it in the very theories of progress, where one prescind from their Enlightenment c materialistic aspects. There is, in progressivism, a "hidden bottom," "a thrill of knowledge whose origin is more than logical, a pride of technical invention, of access to the unlimited domain of space, which contains the presentiment of a deeper will to power, in comparison with which all this is only annatura for unsuspet- tate struggles c revolts, c for that very reason it is so precious and worthy of a more loving care than that which ever warrior has devoted to his weapons." But here again the problem of justification or, as Jünger calls it, legitimization arises. The legitimacy of the new type will have to be demonstrated by its actual ability to control such a world, since "I spirit, as it were, has overpowered itself in accumulating a material which still awaits a power to order it. Thus was born a chaos of facts, of instruments of power c of possibilities of movement," c the present problematic situation would depend on the fact "that this domination has not yet been realized, that we therefore live in an age in which means seem more important than man."

The second difference between the worker's theory and the Nietzschean theory lies in the subordination, proper to the former, of power to a "being," something that appears to be a natural consequence of the rejection of the abstract and anarchic conception of the will to power. Jünger postulates "the inseparable connection of power with a firm and well-determined unity of life, with an unquestionable 'being'; the expression of such a being is precisely that which manifests itself as power, and without it to bear insignia is a meaningless thing." Therefore, "the different nature of the worker, that special being which we have called his figure, c far more important than the forms of a willed power. This being is power, in quite another sense; it is an original capital that invests both the state and the world and creates its own concepts and its own organizations." The elimination of the individualistic moment is then con-

stop from this passage, "Every attitude having an effective relation to power is also recognizable from its conception of man not as an aim but as a means, as a bearer of both power and freedom. Man awakens to the highest power when c in service. The secret of the true language of command is not promising but demanding. Man finds his deepest happiness in self-sacrifice, and Tarte supreme of command consists in Tadding purposes worthy of his sacrifice." The relationship between this purified Nietzscheanism and the direction that is indicated for the true overcoming of the bourgeois concept of freedom is quite visible: in the world of the worker "the right to freedom manifests itself as the right to work [work, always to be understood not in the current, economic sense, as a means for mere sustenance, but in the Jùngerian sense]. Nothing is more evident than the fact that in a world where the name of worker designates a dignity, work is felt as a profound necessity, and freedom is manifested as the right to work. Only at the point where the right to freedom will present such a fonna, can we speak of a domain and an era of the Worker."

Thus, to bring oneself even to a more conditional, social and political plane, "the important thing is not that a new class comes to power, but that a new humanity, on the same level as all the other 'figures' in history, fills the space of power according to a meaning. Therefore, we have recused ourselves from seeing in the Worker the exponent of a new "society" and a new economy. The Worker is either nothing, or he is something more than this: the representative of a certain figure who acts according to his own laws, follows his own vocation, participates in a peculiar freedom.... Either the life of the worker will be autonomous, a direct expression of his being, and yet sovereignty, or it will be nothing more than the effort to secure a share in the field of old rights and the insulting pleasures of an exhausted age."

There is to be noted, here, Interesting transposition of plan that undergoes such a trivial formula of contemporary social ideology, as that of the right to work, in addition, the positive points set by Jiinger are the limits of the concept of will to power, the subsumption of power to the concept of being and figure, the shift to the principle of service, by which the worker is presented as the only possible heir of the Prussian ethics of duty, conceived as that in which the elemental is tamed. It can be said that in the worker remains the raw material of the Nietzschean superman, tending, however, to move from the plane of the infomie to that of the fonna, beyond the great crisis of values. Thus one can even speak of "a more serene anarchy identical to the order

more rigorous, spectacle, this, which is already heralded in the great battles c in the gigantic cities whose images stand at the beginning of our century." "Having passed through the school of anarchy, of the destruction of ancient bonds, (the Worker) must realize his right to freedom in a new era, in a new space and through a new aristocracy."

### *On the transition phase*

From what has been said it is quite clear that Io Jünger considers now the one and now the other of two distinct domains: that of an existing reality, which he interprets, and that of a reality in the making, whose features he believes he can fix. The present age is presented as an age of transition. Where it deals with an already existing reality, the process presents a coercive character; the new type on the one hand endures it, on the other assumes it and corresponds exactly to it a freedom of its own, transposes being into a "ought to be." Indeed, as one of the marks of the new freedom is pointed out "the certainty of having a share in the most intimate germinal forces of time, a certainty which will give a wonderful impulse to thoughts and actions, and thanks to which the freedom of the doer will recognize that he is a particular manifestation of the necessary. This knowledge, in which destiny and freedom meet as on a knife edge, is the sign that life is still going on, that it feels that it is the subject of a historical power and responsibility." At the point where it feels all this, "reduction of the elemental presents itself as one of those ends that determine the transition to something new. And the deeper and more ruthless will be the flame that destroys an exhausted reality, the more mobile, unimpeded and decisive will be the new momentum."

Jünger recognizes that "today we live in conditions in which, if one does not keep oneself paid with mere words, it is very difficult to see that anything is really worthy of being desired," Thus, "one must pass through a point where nothing will appear more desirable than anything that admits of any doubt." "For the individual to take the right attitude is made difficult by his being on the advanced positions of fighting and working. It is necessary, however, to hold these positions without losing oneself in them, being not only the object but also the subject of destiny, and to conceive of life as the field not only of necessity but also of freedom.... At the very point when Tuomo discovers that he is the lord and subject of a new freedom ... his state, whatever situation he finds himself in, will change radically. Once this is understood, many

things even today desirable will appear insignificant." It is added: "Just as only later and only through the poet's art was it possible to recognize that the warlike affair among a hellfire fueled by instruments of precision could have its own meaning beyond all problems, likewise it is not easy to recognize already the relations existing between the figure of the Toper and the world of work of which that fiery environment was the symbol on the warlike plane." "What is visible today is not already ultimate Tordine, but rather a disorder behind which a great law can be guessed," says Junger. This is the dramatic aspect of our time, not captured by the many attempts to interpret it according to material forces and collisions of interests. "It is impressive to see what rigor of intellect, what forces of faith, what amount of casualties are consumed in the partial fights: a spectacle that is bearable only if one assumes that each of these has meaning in the overall action. In fact, each thrust, blind as it may be, is like a chisel blow that decisively draws from the amorphous one of the preformed features of the face of our time. The dimensions of need and danger, the destructions of ancient ties and the speed of every activity increasingly dissolve individual positions from one another, giving man a sense of having lost his way in an inextricable thicket of ideas, facts and interests. What appears here as to systems, prophecies, incitements to believe, resembles the flashing of a spotlight that fleetingly reveals forms only to have even greater uncertainty and obscurity reign immediately afterward... And today one of the most surprising experiences is that which one has in getting to know some of the so-called directive minds of our time: here one realizes the high degree of direction and conformity to a law which, despite themselves, this time of ours possesses."

Here, therefore, it is made clear what is the cornerstone of the whole Tordine of Ideas carried out by Jünger: the faith in a metaphysics, in a reposed positive sense of the whole modern world, in its own dissolutist, mechanized and destructive forms. He asks, "Is it possible to come to this consciousness of a new freedom, to the consciousness of being at a decisive point both in the domain of thought and behind the machines and the tumult of mechanized cities?" He replies, "Not only are there indications that this is possible, but we also believe that this is the prerequisite for all true action and the hinge of transformations such as no redeemer has ever conceived." "And, admittedly, very difficult to attain security in the face of a situation which in appearance is one of pure dynamism, where no axis is discernible; but this is precisely the mark of every attitude to which a future is still reserved." In

particular regard of the mechanized inundation Jünger adds: "Observing this movement, monotonous in spite of everything, which makes one think of a field of Tibetan prayer mills, these arrangements resembling the geometry of the Pyramids, the quantity of victims which, greater than any Inquisition or any Moloch ever required, grows from day to day with modal certainty, in the ossification of all this, what eye that can truly see will not recognize that a destiny and a cult act behind the causes and effects that veil the struggles of our times?". The metaphysical element is an immobility that hides behind movement: "The more we run the more intimately we must feel that in movement lies a motionless being and that every acceleration of speed is merely the translation of an eternal primordial language." Jünger believes he perceives "the calm, preformed power in certain moments when intentions and purposes do not disturb the feeling. So sometimes, when the storm of hammers and wheels is silent around us, we seem to be met in an almost bodily way by the calm that is hidden behind the excess of movement, and it is a good custom of our time that, in order to honor the dead or to impress moments of special significance on the consciousness, we suspend our work for a few minutes, as if by a higher command. That movement is in fact only a symbol of the innermost force... The amazement at the halting of it is, after all, the amazement of the hearing that for a moment believes it perceives the deeper sources that feed the unfolding of movement in time: which elevates that act to the dignity of a rite."

## The world of technology

### *Labor and technology as revolutionary forces*

*The Worker* is divided into two parts. The first concerns the general ideas referred to so far. The second has a special character. It specifies the forms in which labor tends to be constituted as the fundamental category of the modern world; it examines the specific nature of the upheavals produced by the new principle; and finally it studies the structures according to which the whole process should be ordered. The exposition unfortunately does not have a systematic character, repetitions are frequent, the observation of what exists is often confused with the postulation of problematic possibilities. We will try to collect the essential ideas in this second part of the book as best we can.

We already know that for Jünger work is a *forma* of life, a way of being ("The worker would remain such even when thrown by a storm on a desert island, in the same way that in it Robinson remained a bourgeois"), that it does not have a social-moral character, as in the saying of "the sweat of one's brow" — that it while it can be interpreted economically "is not identified with the economy, indeed it decisively transcends all that economy." Now it is added that there is no such thing as work in the abstract that was considered by nineteenth-century sociologies. Today "work" means something specific: "it is not the mere activity, but Expression of a particular



being that seeks to fill its own space and time and to create its own law." Thus we are presented with an aspect of work in which, for example, it no longer has rest and idleness as its opposite, and a particular case is pointed out to us in the way in which people today enjoy themselves: either with sports, whose character of "work" is evident, or recreational conformities which, while taking on aspects of playfulness, are not true antitheses of work but maintain a relationship with it, as particular forines of being in action. Therefore, the diminishing difference between work days and holidays, understood in the traditional sense, is noted.

Today, the principle of work applies not only in practical life but also in the life of thought and scientific systems. "If one realizes, for example, how physics mobilizes matter, how biology seeks to discover the potential energy of life behind the protean manifestations of it, how psychology strives to see forms of activity in dreams and sleep itself, one will have to recognize that in all this not pure knowing operates, but a specific form of thinking. These systems already herald themselves as systems of the Worker," and it is the character of the Worker "that determines their image of the world.... They have changed in meaning; insofar as the importance of their pure cognitive aspect diminishes they are marked by a character of power." As is well known, these ideas of Jünger's could be further corroborated by what has been ascertained by epistemology and recent critique of the sciences, with regard to the pragmatic, practical, active character presented by even the most abstract procedures of modern science; directly or indirectly minded, they are informed by the principle not of disinterested knowing, but to that of action and efficacy, thus, in Jünger's terminology, by the principle of "work."

Of course, essential relations exist between the modern principle of work and the world of technique. Jünger notes, however, that in order to understand them one must reject the concept of a technique in the abstract. Modern technique must be explained in terms of the special will and figure behind it, without which the means offered "would be mere trinkets." We already know Jünger's favorite formula: "technique is the means by which the figure of the worker mobilizes the world." In this respect, technique acquires a quite different meaning than in the progressive sociological systems of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it has a profoundly and "existentially" revolutionary character, its triumphal march "leaves behind a

trail of corpses, of broken symbols," creates areas of destruction corresponding to the gradual, invisible establishment of the new figure.

We are told of the spectacle offered by large cities, "which is that of a growing movement unfolding in impersonal rigor. This movement is menacing and uniform; it carries swaths of mechanical masses close to each other in a monotonous swell regulated by light and sound signals. In these gliding and rotating ensembles that bring to mind the motion of a clock or a mill, order represents the seal of consciousness, of precise rational work.... The kind of movement, of which we are speaking, reigns not only in the rhythm of the cold, luminous mechanical brains that man has created for himself. It is perceived wherever the eye reaches: not only in the means of communication, in which the mechanical overcoming of distances seeks to attain the speed of bullets, but also in every activity," in the fields, in the mines, on the dams, from the most modest workers' bank to the great districts of production; it does not exempt workers in science and business offices. "It prevails where people think and act, as well as where they fight and have fun.... In it is expressed the voice of labor, as primitive as it is all-encompassing, which tends to translate into its terms everything that can be thought, felt or willed." The nature of such language is essentially mechanical. But for Jünger it is very important to note that in the new space "the old distinction between mechanical and organic forces falls into defect." "Here all frontiers become strangely blurred, and it would be idle to ask whether life feels a growing impulse to express itself in mechanical terms or whether special powers clad in mechanical masks are taking living reality back into their orbit," Moon one thing being able, moreover, not to exclude the other. "But what though the reasons, starting from which the breakthrough is produced, and what though the attitude one takes in the face of it, there can be no doubt about its ineluctable reality."

Jünger thus gives adequate prominence to a point not sufficiently acknowledged by the critics of our time, who starting from the idea of the allegedly neutral character, that is, of mere means, of modern technique does not delve into the fatal implications of it. Every life has its own technique which, alone, is adequate and congenial to it, says Jünger. Thus "to welcome a foreign technique is an act of vassalage, the consequences of which are all the more serious, insofar as it is accomplished first of all in the spirit." Modern technology, which is that of the machine, "must be understood as the symbol of a special human type, so that when it is a different type that makes use of it, it is as if one were taking back a

ritual from a foreign cult." The center of Jünger's argument is precisely that while such a technique has an organic and natural relationship with the figure of the Worker, it is destructive for every different figure, involves an attack, visible, against all ancient ties. This explains Tawver sion for the technique, originally instinctively felt by the last representatives of the main castes (*Urstände*) in which traditional societies were articulated before the bourgeois era: priests, warriors and conta dins: "The true warrior uses unwillingly the new means of warfare put at his disposal by technique. In modern armies equipped with the latest technical means it is no longer the warrior as an exponent of a caste who fights when he uses them, but those armies are the warrior form in which the figure of the Worker appears. Similarly, no Christian priest should have any doubt that the electric light bulb instead of the perpetual flame is no longer something sacred, but only technical. But if there is no such thing as a neutral, abstract technique, it is certain that a different influence is at work here; those religious people who still identify the realm of technique with that of Satan show a more confident instinct than those others who put the microphone next to the body of Christ. Likewise, wherever the peasant uses machines and engines, one can no longer speak of a peasant caste. The peasant who begins to work the fields with motive power, instead of with horses, no longer belongs to a caste. He is a worker in special conditions, and he contributes to the destruction of the social order articulated in bodies or castes no less than his fathers who passed directly toTindustna lism contributed to it. Therefore, no less than for the industrial worker, the new problem facing him is either to embody the figure of the worker or to disappear."

That technique affects historical and traditional units also appears in the particular case of war. Jünger says that in their metaphysical dimension the real fronts of modern warfare were different from those that divided the combatants, and it is as if the bombardments against opposing fronts were directed against one essential front. Viewed as a technical process, modern warfare breaks down more than just the resistance of the vanquished nation. It involves an invisible attack on those who use the technical means. In war, nations and states correspond but very little to what they were in the previous era; they take the form of labor units. Forces are evoked, mobilized and activated that go far beyond their intended purposes. "And if at the center of the affair, that is, at the point from which the distinction radiates, but not subject to it, we discern the figure of the worker, the unitary character, the logical

precise of the same destruction." It is no wonder, then, that already as a result of the Great War the last remnants of the old systems, especially the monarchical and dynastic ones, have collapsed like paper castles, and that along with the crowns the old privileges of caste or social body are waning, while the very possibility of leading a bourgeois life is becoming increasingly problematic.

Generally speaking, as soon as technical symbols appear, space is emptied of every different force, of the large and small spirit world that resided there. Technique, says Jünger, "is destructive to such an extent to all previous faith, that this aspect of it has even become secondary." "The Church's various attempts to speak the language of technique serve only to hasten its demise, in a process of complete secularization." And after technology has shown its two-faced, Janus-like face, no longer presenting itself as an instrument of a progress that should make humanity achieve moral and rational perfection; after its possibility of serving both the good and the wicked has been manifested and, with the warlike use of the means it offers, of pushing humanity toward nameless distractions, the same secular religion of the 19th century, the optimistic cult of progress, has been no less affected than traditional religions.

In the present times that of technology is the Punic domain that does not show symptoms of decline, which "makes it clearly appear that it belongs to a different, more essential system of references," to the new world centered in the figure of the Worker. In the short time since World War I, thanks to the seductive language of comfort, rationality and power, "its symbols have spread to the farthest corners of the earth more rapidly than the cross and the bell could among the forests and swamps of Germany a thousand years ago." "And wherever the objective language of these symbols penetrates, the ancient law of life falls away; excluded from the sphere of reality, this law is confined to that of pure romanticism."

Concluding, Jünger writes: "The entire surface of the earth is covered with the rubble of broken images. We are witnessing the spectacle of an end comparable to geological catastrophes. It would be a waste of time to associate with the pessimism of the vanquished or the superficial optimism of the victors." Instead, it is important to discover the "place where one can grasp Death otherwise than from the side of the blade." It is important to be able to *see*. "One is dealing with one of those material revolutions that coincide with the apparition of races, at whose disposal lay the magic of new means, such as bronze, iron, horse, sail. As the horse takes meaning only through the rider, the iron

through the blacksmith, the ship through the type of the navigator, likewise the metaphysics of the technical stmmentary will only become apparent at the point where the race of the worker appears as a superordinate greatness to it."

### *The attack against the individual. The Type*

In their most visible aspect, the processes of the age strike death at both poles of the bourgeois world, both the individual and the mass. Above all, this negative side attracts attention, because to most the ultimate direction of the whole escapes, and the gaze is brought to what is being struck or held in positions of desperate defense, not to what is attacking and advancing. This is why "today there is no shortage of systems, principles, masters and worldviews, but the suspicious side is that all these are too cheap commodities. Their numbers increase to the extent that weakness feels the need for dubious certainty. And the spectacle of quacks who promise more than they can deliver, of sick people to whom artificial nursing home health seems desirable. Finally, there is the fear of the scalpel, to which yet there is no escape. We must recognize that we were born in a landscape made of ice and fire. What is yesterday's is such that one can no longer stick to it, and what is in the making is such that one cannot yet adapt to it." Such a situation requires, as an attitude, a realistic intrepidity,

It is essential, precisely, to carry oneself in those areas of the front where one does not defend but attacks, creating "reserves more invisible and secure than those hidden in armored redoubts. There are no other flags than those one carries on one's body. Is it possible to possess a faith without dogmas, a world without gods, knowledge without maxims, a homeland that no power can ever occupy? And by asking this that the individual today can test the endurance of his armor," considering how "far we are still from that unity that can guarantee us a new security and a new hierarchy in life."

About the demise of the individual, Jiinger begins by noting that those who travel through this changing world are often surprised because after passing through it, mostly no particular person, no particular face remains etched in their memory. In it "just as the individual no longer holds the dignity of a *person*, equally little does it present itself as an *individual*, nor does the mass appear to us as a given quantity of individuals." As for the mass, everywhere we come across it, in political, practical or professional life, in entertainment itself,

and "even where columns are seen as of ants whose forward motion does not occur at will but obeys an automatic discipline," it cannot be disallowed that "it begins to present a different structure."

"Even apart from the fact that repoca reduces the difference between individuals to a minimum, a particular inclination to the common rhythm of thoughts, feelings and movements can be observed." Everything that still binds to the articulations, bodies of traditional societies (dress, gestures, manner of speech, behavior) appears anachronistic, has the character of remnants and empty fountains. "To still distinguish individuals according to classes, castes and even according to professions has, at least, become difficult." And wherever on the ethical, social or political plane, one still strives to come to an ordering starting from those ancient articulations, one ends up finding oneself not in the decisive sectors of the front "but in a province of the 19th century that liberalism, in a work of decades, with universal suffrage, general conscription, compulsory education, mobilization of land ownership and other principles still, has leveled to such a degree that any effort in that direction, and resorting to those means, appears as a joke. What is not yet as clearly apparent, however, is the way in which the diversity of occupations is gradually fading away," for everything takes on a "work" character. "As the division of individual domains grows and, therefore, also the number of occupations, types and possibilities of activity, this same activity becomes uniform and in each of its varieties goes almost to express one and the same elemental movement. The result is an astonishing uniformity of procedures that can be grasped in all its extent only by the one who would be given to look from the Testerno at our world. All this tramenio resembles the changing images of a magic lantern projecting a single light."

To which must also be referred the fact, that the very concept of personal performance is profoundly changing. "The specific reason for this phenomenon is that today the center of gravity of activity has shifted from the individual side of work to the total side of it. Therefore, it becomes secondary to which persons, to which names, the work is linked. This is true not only for actions in the proper sense, but also for every species of activity. One can refer to the phenomenon of the unknown soldier." But, says Jünger, today there are not only unknown militiamen, there are also unknown majors. "Wherever one takes one's gaze, one encounters work produced in this sense, anonymous."

In the same domain of modern scientific and technical achievements, things are not otherwise. "Often the actual origin of the most important modern scientific and technical inventions is obscure. The situation suggests a weave where each new mesh is produced from multiple threads. One can, yes, point to names, but they have something accidental about them. They are almost flashing links in a chain, the assumptions of which remain in the dark. There are prognoses of discoveries which give a purely accidental character to the happy contribution of individuals: matters of organic chemistry as yet unseen and yet already known in all their properties, stars ascertained by calculation but not yet escorted by any telescope." In this regard, Jünger notes that it would be superficial to ascribe in assets to collective bodies, research institutes, technical laboratories or industrial complexes what is lost to the individual. In reality, the total character of work breaks down both individual and collective frontiers, and it is to it that all productivity in our time refers.

"The degree reached by the process of the dissolution of the individual can be recognized even better by the way in which the relations between the two sexes began to transform." When the bourgeois era discovered the individual, a new kind of romantic, idealized, sentimental love was also conceived, which is now a thing of the past: Werther and Charlotte fall back into the good old days just as, in turn, the world of the New Heloise and Paul and Virginia had appeared expired. In this, as in other fields, a process of dissolution and impoverishment is visible. More space than Jünger gave to it in a quick mention could finally be given to the observation of the attack against the individual inherent in the returns to nature: returns, which have a character quite different from the idyllic and picturesque one of the bourgeois period. There is a nihilistic, primitivizing and leveling element, Jünger rightly notes, albeit without sufficiently developing this point, in everything today that is body culture, sports, hygiene, banal sun worship from summer beaches, "life in nature."

Thus the dying of the individual today presents multiple forms: from those that are still the subject of a crepuscular literature, to the gray ones of "economic death," with "processes that, like inflation, reap countless anonymous lives," These transformations affect being, they affect "both what is most visible and what is most hidden." Thus for Jünger it is a matter of indifference, of secondary importance, whether the end of the individual coincides, or not, with the death of the individual. In this regard he does not fail to refer again to the example of modern warfare, the demands of which eliminate all

what is individualistic, the typical and exceptional experiences peculiar to it, of which we have already mentioned, presenting only in a drastic and condensed form the process that is taking place elsewhere as well and that throughout a century could be observed in the existence of representative individuals, "in the possessors of those most sensitive organs, who already perished for some time by inhaling an air from which, instead, the general consciousness still drew a feeling of health." "What dies is the individual as the exponent of an exhausted order destined to disappear. 11 individual must pass through this death, in this respect being indifferent whether or not with it his visible earthly life has ended."

After that, Jünger seeks to identify the new that looms in this area. Beyond the individual begins to take shape what he calls the "Type," present in two distinct aspects, active the one, passive the other, defined by transformations affecting not only the external side but even the external characteristics, general behavior, physiognomy.

First of all, Jünger recalls what he had happened to notice when it came to facial transformations among combatants belonging to chosen, specialized and particularly tested corps. He observes that their faces "lost the variety of individual features while they gained as to decision and hardness of features. It has become more metallic, almost galvanized to the surface; the architecture of the bones has more prominence, there is a simplification and tension of lines. The gaze is phrenic and calm, trained in the observation of objects to be caught in states of high speed. It is, therefore, the face of a race that begins to be transformed by the special needs of a new environment, in which the individual will no longer represent a person or an individual, but a type." "The influence of such an environment," Jünger continues, "can be recognized as surely as one discerns that of detennined skies, primeval forests, mountains or coasts. Individual characters pass more and more into the background before those detennined by a higher law and precise tasks."

So far these are anticipations, in a small number of cases, of *active* representatives of the labor process, of the kind that takes place "at focal points where the sense of happening is condensed." But one must also consider all that in a passive way reflects a similar process in modern life in general. What strikes the eye here is an actual impoverishment. "It is important, however, to take the point of view that, in this regard, can make the loss appear like that of the parts of the stone falling away when a statue is carved."



In fact, "the first impression aroused by the new Type is of a certain hollowness and uniformity. And the same uniformity that makes it so difficult to distinguish individuals of animal or even human races other than our own. From the physiognomic point of view, one is struck first of all by a certain mask-like rigidity of the face, both inherent and emphasized and heightened by external means: shaved face, hairstyle, etc.... That these mask-like traits, which in men give a metallic impression, in women a cosmetic one, correspond to an incisive process, can already be recognized by the softening of the very forms in which the difference of the sexes is expressed physiognomically. In addition to physiognomy, the mask-like trait can be observed throughout the figure of the individual. One can detect, here, the special attention brought to the culture of the body and, properly, as a well-determined, methodical culture to *training*."

"The direction of these processes appears clearly from the transformation of the fashions of dress. Perhaps there was no era when people dressed so ugly and absurdly as in the early bourgeois period. One had the impression that the articles of an immense junk store had been poured out into the streets and squares in a manifold and slovenly variety and there carried with grotesque dignity." This, too, is transforming, wherever the individual has direct contact with the special character of work, which, as we have seen, for Jünger has nothing to do with profession or craft in the old sense, but has the meaning of a new style, a new way in which life presents itself. Where such a style is delineated and today's man devotes himself industriously to an activity, one hardly encounters "civilized" fabric. "One can speak, here, of a typical work outfit, of an outfit having the character of a uniform, since the line of working and the line of fighting tend to blur. This, perhaps, can be observed particularly in the transformation undergone by the military uniforms themselves, where the old varied and bright colors have been replaced by those of the uniformed combat outfits. And a symbol that, like all others of our time, is asserting itself by polling the mask of suitability for purpose. The development proceeds in the sense, that today the military uniform appears more and more as a special case of the uniformed labor; and here the difference between war, peace and parade uniforms is also diminished."

Even apart from these specific cases, the new fashion of dress tends less to emphasize individuality, as in the bourgeois period, than to emphasize a type: a sign of a silent revolution, "it is encountered wherever new units are formed, in the field of both com-

beat than of sports, of camaraderie, of politics, as well as in those places where man has close relations, almost centaur-like relations, with technical means... Like *Vhabitus* in general, the fashions of dress are more primitive, primitive in the same sense as the characteristics of race. Hunting and fishing, living under certain skies, dealing with animals, especially horses, create a similar uniformism. Such uniformism is one of the signs of the strengthening and multiplication of the objective nexuses that engage the individual today."

In general, the Type marks the transition from the "unique" to the "univocal" The bourgeois individual is presented with a unique, unrepeatable character (*einmalig*), the Type with a univocal character (*eindeutig*). This point will be explored further below. Jünger turns often to this juxtaposition, which serves him here to illuminate the transformation undergone by the concept of quality. In the last phase of the bourgeois period, "qualitative" had close relations to the individual and, in the realm of things, referred to that which is proper to a unique work or object, produced in its own right. Today its meaning is different. Jünger notes that, for example, in our day, someone who drives a car will never think of himself as owning a means manufactured in view of what he is, as a particular individual. What he tacitly means by quality is the make, the model, a given type. The individual quality of the object counts to him as a mere additive curiosity, or as a museum thing. In its place, the Jünger will make reservations, distinguishing what is "typical" from what is standardized. However, one and the other can be thought of as the two sides, positive and negative, of the same coin, two manifestations of the same process.

Similar observations are made in the domain of theater and film. At the center of theater was the actor as an individual, and a dramatic work was required to represent the individual. In contrast, in film it would require the actor to represent rather a type. And film knows no differences in performance, interpretations that are no longer repeated; a film is reprojected with mathematical precision in any neighborhood of a city and in any country; its audience is not a particular audience, an aesthetic community, but a uniform audience such as can be found everywhere.

It has relation to the masked character of Type, mentioned above, the increasing importance that number has in modern life, precisely in terms of precise figures. It is, again, a corrosive process for the individual, but one that prepares new structures, what Jünger would call the "organic constructions." If previously the individual "in the very determination of his individuality had referred to his particular values.

lary, the Type tends instead to define itself with elements falling outside its particular existence." Today you have "scientifically" based, mathematical characterology, you have anthropology and so on, all the way to the determination and calculation of blood corpuscles. Everything that is numerical has an ever-increasing part in practical life, in relation to the numerals and designations that go in place of names. "As the occasions on which the individual appears in a mask multiply, likewise increase the instances in which the name has close relations to a digit," in communications, in services, in the distribution of energy. Moreover, "the tendency to express every relationship in figures appears clearly in statistics. In it the figure has the function of a concept apt to fix a reality from any point of view and is developed into a kind of argumentation in which the figures are accorded an evidential value," As for the positive side (all these phenomena of the transitional phase, let us not forget, have a negative and a positive aspect), Jünger notes that here Pimportant "is that the method does not merely consider the individual as part of a sum, but strives to place it in a totality of phenomena."

After also mentioning the 'importance that number has in the modern concept of the *record*, which is an evaluation in figures of human and technical performance, Jünger notes how the very conception of the infinite has been transformed. "There is a tendency to fix in figures both the infinitely small and the infinitely large, both the atom and the cosmos, 'the starry sky above me' (Kant)." And even here the deeper instance would not be the number itself, but a resumption of the principle of "figure" as a category. Indeed, understanding as a function of "figure" excludes the abstractly spiritual concept of 'infinity, requiring instead the particular and organic concept of totality. "This conchiu- se makes the figure take on a different dignity here; it has, that is, a direct relation to that which is metaphysical." Hence, in considering what this orientation may lead to in the future, Jünger asks, "Must it not be recognized that in this way physics itself will have to be transfonned, that it will have to take on a *magical* character?"

The new fact of the anti-individualistic integration of the individual into a totality is also outlined on a higher plane. Whereas the individual, in order to grasp his sense of self and find his own confirmation, felt the need to set himself against the world, the "Type" feels pai te of it and moves at ease in a new space that only to an outside eye can appear wonderful or terrible. This is also accomplished because of the objective and impersonal nexuses that in modern existence increasingly engage the energies of the individual, in a whole in which the most

extraordinary no longer amaze and immediately fit into ordinary life.

For Jünger, it is part of this same context that dying has become easier, that death today has lost much of its former meaning. This can be especially detected where in action is the "Type" rather than the individual. The countless victims of accidents do not in any way hinder the development of modern life. Accident has taken on a different meaning. Yesterday it was referred to unpredictable factors, to the idea of a fatality; today, however, it has close relations with the world of figures. "One can see this in oneself or in others," Jünger notes, "especially at points where the proximity of death is combined with high speeds. Speed generates a kind of lucid thrill, and a group of drivers in a motor race, each sitting at the wheel like a puppet, gives the impression of a strange mixture of precision and danger, a mixture that is characteristic in the intensification of the movements of Type."

As is evident, such situations can be most precipitously observed in modern warfare, which was the anticipation in condensed form also of the general principle now mentioned, of the integration of the individual into a whole. In fact, in modern warfare "there is no longer any real difference between combatants and non-combatants; in it every town, every factory is a fortification, every bastion is a warship, every foodstuff is contraband, every active or passive measure has a military character." That the individual is affected as a soldier becomes secondary; essentially, he is affected by the attack brought against the area to which he belongs. From these case-boundaries of inevitable insertion into a totality, we come without real discontinuity to those corresponding to many processes now in full development in peace life itself. "It cannot be disallowed," says Jünger, "that in this space what is required of the individual grows to previously inconceivable proportions. In the situations created here one is taken back existentially, rather than by a revocable understanding. To the same extent that the individual dissolves, the resistance he can put up to his mobilization diminishes. The protest that rises from man's private sphere is increasingly inane. Whether he wants it or no, the individual becomes responsible in relation to the objective nexuses where he is embedded." What has been peculiar to war, that there be no difference between combatants and non-combatants, thus tends to come true in other domains, in the economy and the rest. "This kind of inclusion suffers no exceptions. It affects the child in the cradle, indeed already in the womb, no less than the monk in his cell or the Negro

that in tropical forests carves the rubber tree. It thus has a total character and is distinguished from the theoretical inclusion of the individual in the sphere of universalistic human rights by its absolutely practical and necessary character. If one could choose to be, or not to be, a bourgeois, an equal freedom is no longer given with regard to being a laborer. This already delimits the overall sphere of a different hierarchy: it is that of an inescapable existential belonging to the type, in an internal formation, in an imprint impressed by the figure; an imprint that is realized by the force of an iron law."

Here, again, it is still difficult to separate exactly the passive forms from the active and positive ones. In the latter case, other qualities, other virtues, other vocations are required than those that were and often still are accorded value. In contrast to the former individualistic isolation, the new man should feel that freedom "is no longer in principle for the formation of an existence unto itself, but consists in the degree to which in the existence of the individual is expressed the totality of the world in which he is embedded."

The uniqueness of Type, which has been discussed, has close relations with the functionality of it. And another aspect of the new world of Type would be, that the individual "is not irreplaceable, but absolutely replaceable." This, too, is an endurance test to overcome, in the process of active or passive depersonalization. One part of an engine that breaks or wears out can be replaced by another, as long as it meets the identical, strict objective functionality.

*The attack on the masses. The organic constructions. The degrees of the new hierarchy.*

By many, the processes that affect the individual in modern civilization are related to the advent of the masses. Jünger's view is different. Having recognized the genetic interdependence of the concept of the individual and that of the masses in Third State civilization, he believes that the processes leading toward the new world of the worker affect and will affect the masses no less than the individual. He says, "To the process of dissolution that invests the individual cannot escape the same complex of individuals as it presents itself as mass." Mass as a determining force disappears in cities no less than it has disappeared on modern battlefields. The era of the masses would already belong to the past, as much as those who think they rely on the masses as the decisive factor. A couple of experts com-

beating behind a machine gun is not impressed by- the approach of an entire enemy battalion; it knows it can hold it off. The same happens now in the social and political domain. "Taken into itself, the mass today is no longer able to attack, indeed not even to defend itself." Actually, in this regard some facts are obvious and in the public domain. For example, uprisings and revolutions today are no longer made by the masses, coups no longer have a tumultuous and barricade-like character, but a technical, "worker's" one: a few well-organized and specialized groups seize, according to a well-elaborated plan, public buildings, power, telephone and radio stations, stations, etc., in every other case the police, with its new means, being able to get the square right in a few minutes. In addition to this Jünger notes how phenomena, such as "the anonymous rise of prices, the fall of the currency, the mysterious magnetism of gold currents," today are certainly not determined by decisions of the masses; if the mass has value today, it does not have it in a positive sense but only in relation to the processes that affect the individual and take away all meaning from him. Finally, with special regard to the political world, it is not difficult to recognize the extent to which the masses are "manufactured." They foim themselves on the basis of processes of o r ganization and propaganda controlled by a few men, who are generally not of the mass, "and express a different type from that of the individuals who form the mass."

Turning now to consider the positive mingled with the negative in the transitional phase, according to Jünger as the bourgeois individual gives rise to the Type, so beyond the mass is emerging "a new order of grandeur in the world of labor," which he calls organic constructions (*organische Konstruktionen*Y Perora, the process is only just beginning. These are structures that are still confusedly detached from the forms of unity of the 19th century but already show their own physiognomy. Their common note is the special character of labor already visible in them, the special character of labor being "the way in which FOperaiio expresses itself on the organizational level, the way in which it def erences and orders human substance." In organic constructions, therefore, "the same metaphysical power begins to act on a different plane, the same figure that with technique mobilizes matter." These are new units appropriate to Type and within which Type is predominantly being formed. As anticipations, Jiinger cites certain new political or party organizations, certain bodies specialized in modern warfare, certain camaraderie associations and other deployments "which differ from the ancient associations no less than the audience of a theater of 1860 differs from the ranks of spectators of a cinema

or a ring." The difference is clarified with the fact that while the mass is essentially formless, so that the abstract, purely theoretical equality of individuals may suffice to it, in contrast "the organic constructions of the twentieth century are of crystalline ecometal type rich in a quite different degree of structuring in the Type that figures therein."

Practically, to all this, to what is now heralded as an organic construction, one belongs less by a decision of bourgeois freedom, than by virtue of objective connections determined by the special character of labor. From the mundane plane, referring to which Jünger, exemplifying, notes that "if it is easy to join a party of the old type and leave it, it is not so easy to detach oneself from the grip to which one belongs as a user of electricity," one goes all the way to functional participations; by a similar character of objective belonging, "even a trade union can rise to the rank of an organic construction." Jünger believes that "in its hidden sense every economic struggle of our time tends to elevate the economy itself, taken as a whole, to the rank of an organic construction, which as such will be removed from the initiative either of the isolated individual or of the individual as a mere part of a mass."

To sum up, the overall process of modern times would thus present itself in the following terms: individualism has given rise to the mass dissolvingly leading toward the uniform, toward the pure realm of quantity; however, the collectivistic phase (a phase that Jünger did not, however, consider in all its importance, in its psychic aspects as well) would be destined to give rise to well-differentiated functional objective units, characterized, among other things, by the overcoming of the opposition between organic and mechanical functions. The chosen expression, "organic constructions," blatantly refers to this seemingly paradoxical feature. In essence, it would seem to be an organicity not having a natural, naturalistic and, in general, given basis, as in the case of the bodies or castes of traditional societies, but created by an association of wills within the framework of necessary and objective processes, with "work" as the specific background, and hand in hand with the depersonalization inherent in the functional value proper to Type. For the higher forms, Jünger will speak of *Orders* and, in general, draw the outline of a new hierarchy destined to take the place of that based on individualistic values or the bourgeois concept of "class."

But let us return to the study of the transitional stage. Jünger writes: "In relation to alien work can be regarded as a mode of life, in relation to his activity as a principle, in relation to forms as a style. Every change in style is mani-

party later than that of man and his activities, because it presupposes an Awareness, an active assumption. Today the new style as the seal of a changed consciousness, one can only present it, the actual situation being that "what belongs to yesterday none more real and what belongs to tomorrow is not yet manifest. Thus it is excusable Terror of those who believe that Uniformization of the ancient world is the essential characteristic of our time. But this uniformization concerns only the area of dissolution.... The new current for a time still flows lazily among the ancient things, just as still for a time the cities were built on the type of buses, automobiles on the type of horse carriages, and factories in the style of Gothic churches. But every devastated and evacuated space is little by little occupied by new forces, and regrets for the good times that have passed away express only the voice of senility." Jünger compares the present state to an interlude: "The curtain has fallen, the transformation of people and scenes is being prepared. All over the earth the destructive transformations for natural and spiritual forms strike the eye more than the preparations of new scenes: masses and individuals, sexes, races, peoples, nations, landscapes no less than persons, professions, ideological systems and states undergo an action that at first seems to involve the complete destruction of their laws." Here it is a matter of educating a different outlook, capable instead of understanding "the preparations for a new unity of time, place and people, for a new dramatic unity whose advent can be foretold beyond both the ruins of civilization (*Kultur*) and the deadly mask of civilization" ( 1 ).

To want to grasp the new, that which begins to reflect the Type, one must look there where one usually looks least, that is, in current life. One must convince oneself that men today are interesting not already when they present themselves as problematic natures, but when they are "simple," without problems. Rather than in libraries and cultural centers one must go "to the streets and squares, to houses and backyards, to airplanes and the subway, wherever a man lives, fights or entertains himself, in short: wherever he is at work." Exemplifying, Jünger asks, "What is there that is more trivial and more prosaic, indeed more boring, than the automatics of traffic on a major artery? But is there not also a sign, a symbol of the way man today begins to move by silent, invisible commands? The living space qua

ti) For meaning of these terms, see note 2 in Introduction.



dagna in unambiguity and naturalness, while the ease and innocence with which one goes into such space grows." Here already lies the key to another world. "Behind the masks of time one discovers something more than the death of the individual that makes physiognomy rigid, something more than the caesura between two centuries." The disintegration of the ancient soul, begun long ago, at the conclusion of general conditions, precedes the appearance of the absolute person.

Already in dealing with the external characteristics of Type, we have spoken of all that, for now, can only be felt as impoverishment or loss. Such loss can be described "starting from the supreme forms of sacrifice to those of a vegetative sadness, of bourgeois death. The eminent representative of the individual, the genius, is the first to be affected by this climate of end." After the individual, the target is the mass. "The process ends with an assault of death against the masses, an assault unfolding without interruption in forms both invisible and visible and catastrophic." Once the direction is recognized, there is no need to pause on details and exemplifications, or to wait for ongoing experiences to provide further material, says Jünger. He therefore moves on to briefly consider the hierarchy that prepares beyond the negative phase.

The mode of being of the Worker and the individual as Type, represent the elemental substance of the new world. In addition, three degrees are distinguished. The lowest degree is that in which freedom and obedience make one in the way of life, beyond the stage in which the processes leading to Type are simply undergone. In the world of work this is thus the most general form, the base of the pyramid. "But beyond this step another, more active type begins to differentiate, a type in which a race in the proper sense takes on more precise traits." (Speaking of race, Jünger is careful to make it clear that he does not mean anything biologically conditioned: "The figure of the worker indifferently mobilizes any human matter," that is, that of any people or race in the strict sense; if in some cases it may produce higher, more typical, purer forms than in others, this does not, however, affect the essential independence of the formative process.) As the natural, the active type, an exponent of the second step of the pyramid, is represented by a number of individuals that is all the more restricted the further upward one proceeds: "One encounters it wherever the special character of labor becomes evident"; it is characterized by its not being found to be what it is by force majeure, precisely, by the objective processes that affect the bourgeois world, "to have also a direction, to stand already in relation to the metaphysics of the world of labor." For Jünger,

"one of the earliest examples of representatives of the active type is the unknown soldier, the embodiment of a maximum of active virtues, courage, readiness for action, and spirit of sacrifice." The virtue of such a type consists "in its replaceability: behind every fallen man stands in reserve those who will replace him. Its measure is the objective performance, without useless words," every other point of view, even the particular front on which one fights, passing into the background; for this, it is observed, a unique type with a unique style has been encountered, beyond the very opposition of fronts, even something like a brotherhood, "which to humanitarian thinking will always be precluded." It is at this level that Jünger also speaks of *Orders*, thus clarifying what he properly means by "race." The examples already offered by Prussianism, the orders of chivalry and finally certain religious orders, such as the Jesuits, are recalled; here equal spiritual formation and equal discipline are the basis of particular types of unity. Of the second degree, that is, of the active type, anticipations would also be found in the ambit of the technicalized world. "Already today it sometimes happens to penetrate the circle of such beings, around whom a new order is crystallized. In complete indifference to ancient divisions, here a radiant power and energy clearly reveal that in the new space work has the rank of a cult. And here, too, one encounters marked faces, which show that the character of mask is susceptible to an empowerment, an empowerment that can be defined as a *heraldic* quality."

The hierarchy does not end at this point; what properly refers to the vertex of the pyramid is indicated here. Unlike the first two degrees, the passive form and the active form of the type, already heralded both in war and in the modern world in general, here we are dealing with figures which, says Junger, have not yet appeared. In the ultimate degree of the hierarchy "the individual will present himself in a direct relation to the *total* character of labor, and only with the appearance of such beings will the art of the state and sovereignty in grand style become possible. Such sovereignty (of the figure) is partially prepared by the 'appearance of the Active Type, which in manifold ways breaks the ancient forms. However, the Active Type is unable to cross the boundaries set by the special character of work: whether as a man of the economy or as a technician, soldier or nationalist, he needs an integration, a command that starts directly from the principle capable of giving meaning to reality." Only in this vertex will "the multiple antitheses that with the oscillation of their terms produce the uncertain and unstable light proper to our epoch be accorded. They are the antitheses of old and new, of power and law, of blood and spirit, of technique and art, of cono-

science and religion, of organic world and mechanical world.... The unity of these opposites will manifest itself in a humanity grown beyond ancient doubts."

Summing up, Jünger writes: "The hierarchy of the 19th century was defined by the extent to which one possessed individuality. In the 20th century, rank will be defined instead by the extent to which one represents the carat tere of labor.... Thus, one should not be misled by the general leveling that affects men and things today. Such leveling means nothing more than the realization of the lowest rung, of the base of the world of work, and it depends on the fact that today the process is experienced predominantly passively. But the more destruction and transformation proceed, the more the possibility of a new construction, of an organic construction, will be specified." Already today the same supreme possibilities indicated above would not be completely excluded, however, they would be linked to dramatic situations, to cases comparable to those "in which only death marks the ultimate victory." "Our time is full of unknown martyrs; to it is proper a depth of suffering not yet seen to the full by any eye. The virtue appropriate to this stage is heroic realism, the spiritual attitude that makes one continue to act even when destruction is foreseen or the vanity of one's efforts is outlined. Thus human perfection in our age c different from that of other times, and is perhaps present at its greatest precisely where c is least conspicuous.... However, it is not found today in the domain of culture, art, affectivity or moral values. In such a domain the discourse is either finished or has yet to begin." There are still residual spaces of a spiritual life, whose value c guaranteed by experiences of a secular past, and where one could retreat. But the forerunners of the new world are in the midst of experiment; what they undertake is not grounded in previous experiences, previous values. "Sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the godless who harbor suspicion for the same doubt," says Jünger drastically, visibly referring to encycpedism as the antecedent of the technical revolution, Nietzschean nihilism c ad analogous with fin-de-siècle entities, "march through landscapes in which higher c lower than normal temperatures threaten life. The more weary individuals and masses have become, the greater will be the responsibility of the few. Neither sideways nor backwards are there ways out; instead, we need to increase the power c speed of the processes in which we are caught. And then c well to present that behind the dynamic excesses lies an immobile center." In such terms are defined, for the transitional epoch, man's relations with the elemental and his union with it.

### *Man and technology, fi problem of the limit*

After indicating the sense of the overall hierarchy of the new world of work, in its three degrees, Jünger returns to some particular problems. First, the relations between man and technique proper to the constructive stage are examined more closely.

According to Jünger what our contemporaries have been able to say about technique is reduced to a poor thing, not excepting the technicians themselves. "It is that the technical represents, yes, the special character of work, but it does not stand in relation to the total character of it." The interpretation is wrong both when man's relations to technology are pessimistically conceived as those of "the sorcerer's apprentice who conjures up forces he cannot stand up to," and when we optimistically refer to "a continuous progress set off toward an artificial paradise." Referring to the first view, Jo Jünger says that there are no mechanized men, but there are machines and men, and that "there is a profound connection in the simultaneous appearance of new means and a new humanity." Such simultaneity "is no accident, but obeys a higher necessity." "Thus the union of man and his means will be the expression of a superordinate unity." Technique is a new language. "A new language is suddenly spoken, and man's answering, or his remaining silent, will decide him." It abdicates "those who believe they can pay no attention to it or dismiss it as absurd." One must instead "grasp its secret law and use it as a weapon. It matters to master this language." What leads to a negative interpretation of the effects of technology on man, and which is actually the cause of the anarchy and crisis brought about by it, is linked to the fact that it is the man of yesterday who uses and tries to dominate the world of technology, hoping to be able to order it to values, phoniles and laws of life that are not adapted to it, starting from the erroneous notion that the dominion of technology would be neutral, would concern only the field of means. The situation will change radically when the figure of the bourgeois and the man of the 19th century is replaced by that of the worker; these in the new language will recognize their own language and speak it "in terms not of mere rationality, progress, utility and convenience, but in the terms of a primordial language." "It will be possible to put technique truly and without contradiction at the service of man when in the individuals and collectives who use it the figure of the worker is embodied," and this figure "will manifest its heroic traits."

Jiinger's idea is clarified through the critique of the other interpretation of technique, the progressive one, almost always pre-

supposed by those who do not take sides against it. Jünger rightly notes nothing that "even if the 1 world were to be reconstructed to the very end by present-day technology," characterized by unbridled specialism, "none of its most important problems would be solved." The pride with which the human spirit considers its unlimited horizons, the supposed relations between spiritual progress and technology, the prospect of "a continuous march forward in a climate of conjuncture, in a world in which religion, and particularly the Christian religion, will be replaced in a redeeming function by science, in a space in which the enigmas of the world having vanished, technology will be assigned the task of freeing man from the curse of labor and making more worthy things possible for him," all this order of ideas in Jünger's view will perhaps already shortly seem incomprehensible.

The thesis he states is that the technical process can and must have limits: it is the logical consequence of the idea that the new man will no longer be the object but the subject of that process, will dominate it, will adapt it to his own being. And a reaction against the disengagement of technical development from man, against the stretching of it toward the unlimited\* "like a sphere coming into contact with ever new tasks as its surface expands." Wanting to look for the origin of such a situation, it is not difficult to recognize its relation to that abstract concept of the infinite as unlimited which, proper exclusively to the Enlightenment epoch, never existed before and such that "to future generations it will appear unintelligible," is the opposite of the principle of the figure, this leading instead to the idea of the universe as a whole, "as a conchive and well-defined totality." On the qualitative side, "the kind and extent of every development is determined by being. This also applies to technique." The development of technique is ordered to well-defined situations; therefore, it will end "at the point where technique, as a means, responds to the specific demands placed upon it by the figure of the *fope-ray*."

It has been seen that precisely in this, according to Jünger, the right, the title of legitimacy of the figure of the worker to sovereignty should be revealed: in the ability to set a limit, to impose a stability on a system of means and developments, which has become overpowering and anarchic. What scope, what a paradoxical character this has, can be understood as soon as one considers its most direct concrete implications. It would not be so much a matter of arresting "the unleashed giant" of which Werner Som-bart spoke in examining the latest *fonne* assumed by high capitalism and superproduction, as of extinguishing that futuristic fever that made Bernanos exclaim, "*Où fuyez-vous en avant, ûnbécils?*"

It is evident that never will the bourgeois be able to be from so much, because it would be necessary to think in terms other than those of utility, material and social progress, comfort, ease and so on. As long as it is the bourgeois as such who use technology, not the type with its heroic, to a certain extent even ascetic vocations, the arrest of the technical process will appear as an absurd utopia and the seductive prospects of its continuous "conquests" will conceal the "flight forward" of modern man. This, then, is one of the interesting points of Jünger's conception: beyond the dissolution of the bourgeois world brought about by technology, beyond the regime of pure dynamism of almost self-nourishing forces that has taken over from that dissolution, we must set out toward a new world of stability and limitation, thus, in a way, toward a new classicism of 'action and domination, where meanings of a higher order will have to be expressed through the new integrated mechanical language, which has become unambiguous because it is fixed in a state of perfection.

At this stage, the language of technology "will be no less important or less profound than any other, it will have not only its own grammar but also its own metaphysics"; it will appear that the machine as such has no less secondary part to play than man as a mere individual: it will be only one of the instruments of depression, in this context, the mind, of course, cannot help but also bring itself to what seems to be the case-limit of a technique dissolved by the - Tuomo, that is, to the development of technical means which in war offer total possibilities for destruction. Since *The Worker* was written, these perspectives have become increasingly evident in relation to the dark face of the so-called atomic age. Jünger already noted that "the spirit follows with legitimate apprehension the appearance of the new means," and if even in this respect we find ourselves in a precarious situation, this is equally due to the subsistence of the contradiction between technique on the one hand, on the other hand of an inadequate counterpart, linked to yesterday, to the 19th century, concerning the human type, systems, ideologies. Cheap solutions are sought that are mere palliatives, deluding themselves that a catastrophe can be avoided through negotiations and discussions, always keeping in the area of the bourgeois category of "contract" and "society." the unspoken premise continuing to be almost always the rationalistic and Enlightenment anthropology, the idea that "man is good by nature, while he is not good, in a good or evil at the same time, so no calculation is up to reality unless it starts from the principle, that there is nothing of which man is not capable." In this domain, too, the decisive point is thus given by the advent and sovereignty of

a new man, of the Type, asserting his own way of being and his own law in a space that of necessity will stretch to the whole planet. Everything else is consequence; in that assumption even the extreme alternatives will appear secondary. Order and unity will subsist; the anarchic, contradictory and revolutionary phase (into which any conflicts yet to come will fall) will in fact be ideally concluded and exhausted. So thinks the Jünger.

### *The construction site landscape*

It will not be without interest to hint at what Jünger brings out as to the particular effects of our living in a provisional space where technical developments do not obey a superordinate law, do not yet turn toward organic and enclosed forms, but make one think of an inverted pyramid, whose faces starting from the bottom widen indefinitely, instead of starting from the base, and shrinking more and more and ending within a determined time at a summit, as in their natural *terminus ad quem*: while the area is cluttered with the remnants of forms and activities belonging to the past.

Where it is not a museum landscape (like various German authors, Junger uses the term landscape, *Landxchajt*, to designate a given environment and the climate that corresponds to it), one can speak of a transitional landscape having forge or building site characters. "There is, in it, no stability of form; everything is incessantly reshaped there according to a restless dynamism. Nothing is built there to last, as was the case with the ancient buildings and the valid language of forms already created by traditional art. "Every medium has a provisional character and is intended for uses of limited duration." As in architecture, so also in economy and the conduct of life there is no stability whatsoever. "The individual lives vegetatively in the midst of this landscape where he is asked to contribute partial labor whose ephemeral character is not doubtful to him." In economics, the mutability of means has as its consequence "the incessant investment of capital and labor which, under the guise of free competition, is contrary to all the laws of economics. It is thus that generations succeed one another who leave behind them neither monuments nor savings, but simply a certain degree of the mobilization of the world." "Economic law is being overwhelmed by other laws reminiscent of those of war; not only on the battlefields but also in economics, fountains of struggle are emerging in which, after all, neither side

is truly victorious." "This situation of impermanence," Jiiinger continues, "is also visible in the confusion and disorder that have marked the technical landscape for more than a century. It is a spectacle that wounds the eye and is caused not only by the destruction of the natural ocultural landscape in a but also by the incomplete character of technology. These cities with their wires and with their exhalations, with their din and with their dust, with their phonon confiision and their chaos of ancient and modern architectures that with each decade give them an ever-changing face, are gigantic construction sites of forms, but they themselves are formless. They lack a style, unless one wants to consider anarchy as a particular style."

"Because of the state of incessant movement in which we find ourselves, the energies and risives of life are increasingly being hoarded.... This prevents existence in any of its domains from fixing itself in precise and unquestionable orders. Rather, existence resembles a deadly marathon in which one must employ all one's energies if one does not wish to remain on the ground." "For those who do not belong to our space, the whole must present something incomprehensible, indeed crazy. Behind the ruthless mask of economics and con- coherence unheard-of things happen. For example, the Christian should see something satanic in the forms assumed by contemporary advertising. Abstract evocations and light contests in the center of cities bring to mind the mute and ruthless struggle of plants to secure land and space. An Oriental [here it would be good to clarify by saying: an Oriental of yesterday] should have a painful impression to see that every person, every passerby on our streets has all the characteristics of a competing unconidor. Most modern installations are short-lived: after a given period they are transfonned or dismantled. So there is no longer even a capital in the ancient, static sense: the value of gold itself has become uncertain." "Added to all this is the indiscriminate susci- tion of new needs, the creation of comforts without which Fuomo now believes he can no longer live but which increasingly increase his dependence and obligations.... In turn, the new needs are as varied as they are changeable. The sense of durability as expressed in the pleasure of owning certain real estate seems to be disappearing; otherwise it would appear incomprehensible, for example, that for a car, which has a few years of durability, people today spend sufficient sums to buy a vineyard or a country cottage." "There is no longer a craft in which one can attain a definitive master skill: one is all eternal apprentice. Traffic and production have something unlimited and unpredictable about them; the faster one



goes, the less one approaches the goal.... The instruments of power are also changeable. On the great fronts of "civilization" warfare binds itself to a feverish replacement of the formulas of physics, chemistry and high mathematics with more effective ones. Thus the gigantic arsenals of destruction guarantee no security; and perhaps as early as tomorrow the clay feet of the colossus will be discovered. Of stable, there is only change, and this crushes every effort made to achieve a possession, a satisfaction, a security."

It is evident that by the very fact of accusing all these problematic features of contemporary civilization Jünger confirms, that in his idea the dynamic and activist aspects of the world of work have a provisional character, belong only to a transitional phase. A state of equilibrium, of "constancy of means," will have to take over, as mentioned above.

"The characteristic of the present situation is that the means at our disposal are not only sufficient for every need of life, but give more than what was required of them." It is acknowledged that there are already attempts to curb the growth of means through agreements, that is, through authoritarian measures. "Already there are domains in which attempts are made to bring technical development to a conclusion, so as to create zones removed from incessant change." But such attempts can only make possible a provisional regulation, not a true and final order. Instead, the state of equilibrium and constancy requires the aforementioned condition, the advent and sovereignty of a new human type. The new man will bring technology to that perfection which will also mean its limit. Then from the "building site landscape" we will move to the "planned landscape." Important, however, is Jünger's recognition that "perfection, as technical perfection, will be but one of the signs of the conclusion of the ongoing mobilization. It may lead life to a higher level of organization, but not to a higher level of value, as progressivism thinks. It will mark the taking over of a highly ordered static space from a dynamic and revolutionary space. It is therefore a transition from change to constancy, the consequences of which will nevertheless be very important."

"Constancy of means will lead to a stability in life of which all idea has almost been lost. This stability is not to be understood as a lack of friction on the rational-humanitarian line or as the supreme triumph of *comfort*, but rather in the sense, that an objective stable background will make the measure and rank of human performance recognized more clearly and precisely than is possible in a situation full of unpredictable, dynamic and explosive factors. This can be expressed

saying that the figure of the Worker will make it possible for life to have a figure itself." The final stage will, moreover, be *Gestaltung*, a formative action in a higher sense, with a new style which in every domain will have natural, spontaneous and necessary traits.

Jünger judges that in one form or another "a conclusion of technical development and, therefore, stability will be reached. Indeed, in multiple epochs stability has always been the rule, while the feverish pace of change in our time is without example in history." "The mutability of means does not exist in itself; it is only a sign that technology is not yet, with respect to man, in a clear relationship of *seivizio*, in other words: that a true sovereignty over it has not yet been realized." For all the crises, conflicts and upheavals that have taken place or are yet to take place is given the image of the bangs or noises of the starting phase of an old-fashioned engine, which will be followed by the smooth and almost silent movement.

Ours, therefore, would be "a strange period of sovereignties sunsetted and sovereignties not yet arisen." However, one would have already "passed the zero point." "The first phase of technique, of the mobilization of the world through the figure of the Worker, necessarily having a destructive character, is already giving rise to a second phase, in which technique stands at the service of great and daring plans," Still far off, however, is the third phase, the decisive phase, in which the figure of the Worker will present itself as that of a builder in a higher sense, and in our space will manifest what precisely he lacks, "the figure, the metaphysics, that authentic greatness which cannot be achieved forcibly, by the will to power or the will to believe."

Meanwhile, as far as style is concerned, we note that in the outermost domain embryonic forms of organic construction are already visible, corresponding to an annonic fusion of man and the tools at his disposal. Already today "one cannot fail to recognize an impulse not only toward greater utility but also toward greater simplicity of line. And we feel that such developments satisfy not only the reason but also the eye and, to tell the truth, according to intentionality characteristic in every organic form of growth." "At least in certain partial glimpses the twentieth century already presents a greater purity of line, betrays already an incipient clarification of the forming technical will.... One begins to have a sense of high temperatures, of the cold geometries of lights and of the incandescence of metal. The landscape becomes more constructive and more dangerous, colder and more inflexible; in it disappear the last remnants of the "cute" culture of cordiality that speaks to the soul. There are already areas that can be tra-

pour like volcanic regions or dead lunar moors where a lucid and invisible presence reigns." The state of perfection that certain tools have already reached can also be observed in certain parts of technical space, "where a growing unity and totality is asserted. At first the technical means penetrate like a disease into given points, representing almost foreign bodies in the substance in which they appear. New inventions invest the most diverse domains, like shots fired at random. In equal measure the number of destructions and new problems to be solved grows. However, it will be possible to speak of a technical space only when these points come together, like so many knits of a single fabric. Only then will it appear that there are no particular performances unrelated to each other. In a word, through the sum of the special characters of the work the total character of it will appear." It is then that the style of organic constructions will be completely affirmed, because two facts will be agreed upon: that, that the "Type" in order to act needs means appropriate to it, and that in these means lies an elementary language that only the "Type" can speak.

As is evident, at this point the problem of the inner orientation most appropriate to the age of transition" arises again in relation, also, to the world of culture and the inner estate. In Jünger's opinion, today there is a residual bourgeois culture that "is a kind of narcotic," "a luxury that cannot be afforded in the present conditions, in which it is not a matter of discourse around tradition but of creating it." "We live in a historical period in which everything depends on an intense mobilization and concentration of available energies. Perhaps our fathers still had time to deal with the ideals of an objective science and a cultivated art *per se* itself." Instead, we would find ourselves in a situation where both in the external, material field and in the internal, spiritual field, the stark problem of what is necessary must arise and where it must be the necessary that points out the tasks to every creative energy, from the simplest to the highest. In this regard Jünger is pleased with quite drastic expressions. For example, he says that the more the conduct of life will have "a cynical, Prussian, Spartan or even Bolshevik character [in which regard he evidently refers to the type of the "pure ones" vague by early Communism], the better it will be"; that "a cut deep enough to free us from the old umbilical cord" can effect it only by an energetic consciousness embodied in young and resolute elements, "and the less culture there will be in such a stratum, the better it will be." Unfortunately, the age of general culture has deprived us of a pool of capable illiterates; likewise, if today it is easy to find thousands of people

arguing about the Church, in vain would they seek the ancient saints of the rocks and forests." Aside from these paradoxical anti-intellectual polemical cues, as for the Sparlano character, Jünger does indeed associate with the type of the worker a virile and almost ascetic line of life, **The** principle is that it matters "not already to improve the conditions of life of the Worker but to attribute to them a higher, decisive meaning." "The first step is to stop thinking and feeling in the old forms, the second is to stop acting according to them." "One can foresee that for the individual in a pure world of labor the burdens will not diminish but even grow; *perón!* at the same time new, entirely different forces will be released at their height. Every new consciousness of freedom leads toward new hierarchies, and in this will lie the principle of a deeper happiness, yearned for by renunciation itself: when even happiness is still the case to speak of." Jünger adds, "Just as it pleases one to see free desert tribes who, clothed in rags, for their only wealth have their horses and precious years, so too would it please one to see the grand and precious paraphernalia of "civilization" (2) served and directed by a living staff in monkish or soldierly poverty. And, this, a sight that gives manly joy and has been renewed wherever, in view of great tasks, higher demands have been placed on man. In this respect phenomena, such as the Order of the Teutonic Knights, the Prussian Army, and the Society of Jesus are models, and it should be noted that to soldiers, priests, scientists and artists a natural relationship to poverty is proper." A similar thing should appear possible and natural in the "forge landscape in which the figure of the Worker mobilizes the world," in close relation to Orientation toward the real, the essential and the necessary. Thus also presents an "imagining of the State not as a passenger or cruise steamer but as a *guet* ship in which the utmost simplicity and sobriety must reign and every act must be performed with an instinctive confidence."

Finally, we find again the Nietzschean theme of the] asceticism of power, when Jünger, speaking of the means of one who will be able to command the riches of provinces and metropolises, says that he "will be able to command them all the more securely the more he knows how to despise them." Thus we return to confirm what we have already noted repeatedly: Tension between the ideal of the Jüngerian Worker and that of the welfare vege-

(2) For the meaning of this *tonnine*, refer again to note 2 *dirintit*)duzi€>nc.

tative and simple prosperity, which is still associated with the purpose of all technical and social progress.

As noted, Jünger likened the present state to an interlude in which, after the curtain has come down, new scenes are being prepared for the characters. The elemental themes will remain, new will be the language into which they are translated, "the assignment of parts in the repetition of the great drama." "Heroes, believers and lovers never die; each age discovers them again and again," they corresponding to as many "figures" of a "mythical," i.e. superhistorical, plane. Then the specific problem of human forms proper to the *Epoch of the Worker*, or Type, and technicalized space would arise. Since Weave has been referred to here as a fundamental category as being in act, in an active relationship with Tele-matic, with pure, essential, and possibly even dangerous energies, for the new form in which primordial types will reappear on the various scenes in preparation, one should therefore think of an extension of this mode of being to the field of personal life in the proper sense, i.e., to private life. While this is certainly Jünger's idea, he does not, however, deal with the subject in part; for example, he does not tell us anything detailed about the form that in the world of the Type will take the relations between the sexes, the family, the main human relations.

As for faith, the Type would leave behind the antitheses proper to secular liberalism, it would be characterized "not by not having a faith but by having a different one. It is destined to rediscover a glorious truth that has been lost, namely, life and worship make one." It has been seen that Jünger repeatedly speaks of a hidden "cultic" (*kultisché*) dimension of work. However, this view is not specified either. "Life" being a reality with multiple faces, a "cultic" assumption of it can have different, even naturalistic and problematic meanings. It would seem that the formula now hinted at by Jünger refers to an attitude that, without excluding a metaphysical background, is one of total commitment to life and excludes any kind of evasion. Indeed, in one place it is said that a new thought, formed in accordance with the principle of the figure, "can be recognized by its being able to discern the *universalia in re*," that is, according to the sense of this scholastic expression, the transcendent, superindividual principles as they are in action in reality. Therefore, any speculative dualism, to the Type would appear as a kind of "heresy" or "high spiritual betrayal." From dualism, says Jünger, derive "all the antitheses of power and right, of blood and spirit, of idea and matter, of love and sex, of soul and body, of man and nature, of spiritual sword and sword"

secular, antitheses belonging to a language that will have to be heard as foreign." According to our author, such antitheses still feed an interminable dialectical discourse, have a corrosive action and eventually lead to nihilism "because, with them, everything is transformed into a way of evasion." This therefore confirms the idea, that Jùnger for human behavior has essentially in view an ideal of active wholeness, even if in this regard he stops at the simple statement, while starting from it many essential problems of the inner life should have been clarified, and prevented deviations and flaking to which not a few spiritual currents of our time have given rise by espousing a confused hrationalistic religion of life.



## Sovereignty of the Worker

### *Art, culture and Gestaltung in the world of Type*

Jünger dwells at greater length on the problem of art or, to put it better, what he calls *Gestaltung*, a German term for any form-creating activity other than art in the strict, traditional sense.

It has already been mentioned that in the diorama of the present transitional era, traced by Jünger, the building site or forge landscape would have for its counterpart a "museum activity" (*musealische Tätigkeit*). The expression was coined for all those cultural and artistic forms that form the residual legacy of the bourgeois era. Due to the fact that the principle of work has not yet created its own unique style, it is museum activity that predominantly fills the intellectual space of our time.

Jünger's view is the following: there existed works and forms generated in his time by a creative force intimately linked to the basic figures of true civilizations. The essential, living, elemental connection of the artist with these figures has now been lost; this is not why we strive to reproduce those forms and preserve them as a criterion of measure for all that is new. Instead, one should ask, whether new primordial situations have not intervened, the reality of which has not yet found tangible expression in art and there is therefore no



already been given a freedom whose use one must only learn. Jünger explains by this state of affairs the unproductiveness and non-creativity often held against our age in the aesthetic domain. He also speaks of "a historicist fetishism that stands in direct relation to the defect of creative force," judging that everything about "the preservation and reproduction of the so-called values of culture has assumed such proportions that a lightening of baggage seems necessary." He adds, "The worst thing is not that a circle of critics, connoisseurs and collectors is formed around every shell already clothed and ceased from life, because this, after all, to a greater or lesser extent has always happened. More worrying, however, is the fact, that this traffic generates a stereotypical value complex which conceals a deep apathy. Here we juggle with the shadow of things and advertise the concept of a culture alienated from any primal force: all this, in times when the elemental is again penetrating the living space with its unmistakable demands."

Some believe that original creation today is hindered by the specific situations and means of the technical age. But for Jünger "such means are not impediments, but rather touchstones of the creative force, the measure of which will be given by the ability to employ unitarily precisely those means: which is impossible as long as the idea of the antithesis between the organic world and the mechanical world subsists. Such an idea betrays only a lassitude, the perplexity aroused by the coming into action of different, but by no means purely mechanical laws. One indulges in attempts which, after all, manifest a desire to be original in the individualistic sense. Instead, one must recognize the existence of a space in which a far greater originality than in the world of the individual now prevails." He then comes to accuse that contemporary art which does not participate at all in the ancient values of some "figure" but lives from it as a parasite while carrying out a polemic against today's climate and means, a polemic dictated by the will to divert the spirit "from that harshest and hardest space which will be the theater of decisive activity."

This activity will have as its object forms having a character that is no longer subjectivistic but "typical." Evidently, it is the same direction along which the individual gives rise to the type, an embodiment of the new figure. Jünger notes that parallel to the advent of the bourgeoisie and democracy while art had become absolutized and generalized, the idea that it is essentially an individual manifestation had also taken hold. This orientation culminated in the cult of genius proper to the 19th century. "Thus art history was essentially presented as a history of personalities, and the works of art themselves are

worth as so many autobiographical documents. In correlation with this, artistic genres in which the subjectivistic and individual factor predominates came to the fore, with a regression of objective genres, such as sculpture and architecture." More generally, the very concept of culture was influenced by that of the individual: "culture was referred to an individual effort, to the feeling of a unique experience and the importance of being an author... Creative work would take place in a special and exceptional space, in the higher sphere of Idealism, in romantic escapes from daily life or in the exclusivist zones of an abstractly aesthetic activity. In correspondence, as the subject of contest activity one is presented who possesses unique, extraordinary faculties, not normal even in the pathological sense. This rank is the higher, the more the importance of the mass grows, given the correlation existing between these two poles of the bourgeois world: nothing happens in the one pole that does not affect the other. The more the mass grows, the more the need is felt for great individualities, in which the particles of it see their confennation. This need has ended up producing a strange phenomenon of our days: the invention of the artificial genius who, supported by the means of advertising, has the task of embodying the part held in other times by great personalities. A special cult is also paid to these figures, in which what is *personality* is brought back to the perspectives of the mere individual. This explains the surprising success of certain contemporary biographical literature, which basically tends only to show that there are no heroes but only men, that is, individuals."

All this pertains to the terminal phase of the previous period. The new world would be characteristic of an entirely different orientation, the idea that "in a true culture life and aesthetic formative activity are too intimately connected for the possession of creative force to be regarded as something unique, extraordinary and miraculous. Here the marvelous is found everywhere, it is part of the 'order'. Therefore, there is no culture in the sense that has become current today."

Jünger adds, "Just as the modern feeling of nature attests to a split that has occurred between man and nature itself, likewise that concept of culture is a sign of modern man's distance from true creativity. One can no longer conceive that forms can be created without effort, with a movement that is already an expression and representation of a measure; that therefore there can be a culture

Whose works rise like plants from the ground or receive their imprint from crystalline laws."

Here one has a curious recourse, beyond bourgeois individualism, about what is positive and what should characterize art and, in general, *Gestaltung*: in the future inundation of the worker one ends up attributing to 'art the same characters as traditional art, taken in its strictest sense, that is, that of its origins, having in itself, as we know, a style of anonymity and symbolic typicality. To illustrate his idea, Jünger refers precisely, as a persuasive example, to the "landscapes of tombs and temples in which constant and simple relationships, chin-mounts, columnar formations, ornaments and symbols recur in solemn uniformity and by which life surrounds itself with well-determined, unambiguous images. All of this presents a fullness and an enclosed unity." He also notes that the typicality, traditional impersonality, and lack of originality in an individualistic sense proper to such landscapes as a whole are found in the details. He recalls how the faces of Greek statues eschew physiognomy, just as classical drama eschews psychologistic motivations; he recalls civilizations in which actors presented themselves with masks, gods with animal heads, in which "a characteristic of the forming force was the petrifying of certain fixed symbols in an eternal repetition reminiscent of that of natural processes." In the face of such a "typical" world, says Jünger, "The stranger feels not already delPammirazione but *awe*, and even today the night vision of the great Pyramid or that of the solitary temple of Segesta under the Sicilian sun cannot fail to continue to arouse such a feeling."

Well, "to such a world, which has the saturated intensity of magic circles, also approaches the Type embodying the figure of the Worker.... The forms of which the Type is i 1 representative certainly have nothing in common with the current concept of culture: but they present an incomparable unity which tells us how it operates something more than reflected consciousness." Lambito proper to artistic activity in the world of the Worker is thus defined in these terms. "The different rank of such activity lies in its having nothing in common with individualistic values. The renunciation of individuality is the key that opens to man new spaces, the notion of which had long since been lost." If all of Jünger's lapra blematic concerns turning the negative into the positive by means of a change of sign, of this we find a characteristic example in these views. Even in the aesthetic domain Jünger has in view a process that affects the individual to lead not toward the subpersonal (as in the leveled and standardized forms of the period of

transition), but toward the super-personal: this is confirmed precisely by taking for example Part c symbolism typical of traditional civilizations, where, even until the Gothic period, in the foreground was the work in its objectivity, in its power to express universal connections, and not the author with his problems and subjectivity.

Moreover, Jünger does not neglect to accuse the misunderstanding of those who would relate the typical and objective forms he understands, to those created in a direct relationship with the mass and industrialization; of which mass-produced factory products are the *exemplum*. The latter "have in common with typical forms only the character of uniformity, and this same trait pertains only to the exterior. There is a definite difference between the univocity proper to the pebbles of a navy and the univocity of crystalline type forms. It is the same difference between the nineteenth-century atom and the twentieth-century atom, that is, between mechanical magnitudes and organic construction." Symbolic typicality should therefore not be confused with empty uniformity. "Typical forms are incomprehensible, impossible, unrealizable without precise reference to the figure, with which they stand in a relation from imprint to seal"; precisely because of their representative and symbolic character, they, although they reflect none of the individualistic values, "are distinguished from the insignificance proper to that which refers to the abstract mass." And while for the final phase of the Worker's sovereignty may well conceive of an assertion and spread everywhere of the typical forms, this universality will not derive from their corresponding to a cosmopolitan society leveled according to rationalistic physique, but rather from the fact that the well-determined, univocal human figure from which they derive, has risen to a shaping power with universal dimensions.

In opposition to the concept of art and culture as a detached domain it is, in general, affirmed once again that true form has nothing extraordinary about it; it cannot appear in isolation, in closed and precious enclosures; it must manifest itself *equally* as it is part of ordinary life. As we can well see, this is also a return to what was proper to traditional civilizations, where there was no domain that to some extent did not bear the imprint of the specific elemental themes characterizing each of them. "To create the highest culture and form in the world of work will be called the Type, in whose action the total character of work will be directly expressed. A language of immovable symbols in which pure being will be sensitized will go to testify that the figure of the worker contains more than mere movement, that it also has cultural significance."

With all this, from the domain of the arts in a narrow sense we obviously move on to that larger domain to which we have said correspond *Gestaltung* expression. The problem of *Gestaltung* of a total area will arise, in the same sense as the power that Tav will be made materially possible. If total mobilization will concern "the transformation of life into energy as it manifests itself in technology, in the economy and traffic, with the rustling of wheels or on the battlefields as fire and movement," referring instead to the *power of life* "*Gestaltung* will express Weave and must therefore make use of a language not of movements but of forms."

In addition to the special domains of art, *Gestaltung* in an eminent sense will concern earthly space. "There will certainly be no lack of tasks appropriate to a will that sees in the earth its elemental material. They will be tasks in which first of all the close connection which, wherever life is in order, exists between art and the art of the state will become apparent. The same force that on the political plane manifests itself in sovereignty, in art will manifest itself as *Gestaltung*. Art will have to show that in its highest aspects life is to be conceived as a totality. Art will be nothing detached from life, and having an independent value, nor will there be any domain that cannot also be considered as *del-Tarte* material." The highest task that the artistic will can set itself in the era of the Worker is the formation of the landscape. "The formation of the landscape as a function of an idea is one of the evidences peculiar to every epoch that experienced an indisputable, unquestionable sovereignty. The most important examples are given to us by the great sacred landscapes dedicated to the worship of the gods and the dead, arranged around sacred rivers and mountains." In this regard, from the legendary Atlantis with its immense constructions we go as far as the landscapes of the Nile valley, those of ancient Mexico, the parks into which Chinese emperors transformed entire provinces, the Moorish gardens of Granada and the residences of Baghdad. "They are all examples of a perfection that elicits an almost painful joy. They are testimonies to a yearning will to create earthly paradises. This will operates from the unity of all energies, of technical, social and metaphysical energies.... Here nothing is isolated, nothing is considered too big or too small not to stand in the service of the whole. Those who have a sense of this unity and identity of *Tarte* with a very high vital energy investing all space, will not fail to recognize how absurd our museum activities are."

As is obvious, the presupposition of these perspectives of the world of the Worker is always the hypothesis of an occult metaphysics as its sub-

layer. Only in this way is it possible not to deem it paradoxical, that landscapes absolutely dominated by technology, naked and mathematical, planned, such as are foreshadowed in some sectors of the contemporary world, also possess that soul, that spiritual, symbolic and "cultural" dimension that is essential in all the examples of *Gesaltung* drawn by Jünger from the traditional civilizations of the past and presented as a model.

### *On the values of the Type*

Before leaving this field and briefly considering the transformations that on the socio-political level should prepare for the domination of the Worker, it is worth pausing for a moment longer on what Jünger adduces in defense of the values proper to the Type.

He certainly recognizes that, for those accustomed to judging according to the individual and his originality, it is not easy to recognize the rank proper to the new man, the Type. The close relations it has with number, the strict univocity of its conduct of life and its institutions, structured as organic constructions, seem to contrast sharply its world with that in which man was thought to truly participate, as an individual, in the "superior nobility of nature." "The metallic features of Type's physiognomy, his love of mathematical structures, his lack of psychological differentiation, and his very physical health, correspond little to the imageries many people have of the representatives of creative force. Type seems bound to the forme of "civilization," forme divergent both from natural forme and from that of a "civilization" (1) by their characteristic lack of value."

An argument against these assumptions and in defense of the idea, that what is typical can rank not inferior but even higher than what is individual and individualistic, Jünger believes he has already adduced in the field of culture, recalling the style proper to ancient traditional civilizations. A further argument he now draws from the world of nature, and we shall refer to it because an interesting shift in perspective is evident there. Jünger thus notes that "there where nature acts formatively it manifests far greater care for the definition and preservation of typical forms than for the differentiation of the individual representatives of those forms.... In the im-

(1) For the meanings of these terms, see again boring 2 of the Introduction.

mensa variety of the species that populate our world there is a strict law in force that seeks to ensure clear structuring and the scrupulous constancy of each form, in this appearing far more admirable than in those exceptions to which attention is generally brought instead. There is nothing more regular than the arrangement of the axes of crystals or the architectural ratios of those small calcareous, horny or siliceous works of art which populate the bottom of the seas; and not without reason have there been those who have thought of making a unit of measurement of the diameter of a beehive cell. In man himself as a being of nature, that is, considered in his race, the high degree of uniformity and inevitability rivalling both in his exterior and in his thoughts and actions is surprising."

If one does not see this, if one believes that one recognizes the true shaping force of nature not in the conchiused and typical figures but in the variations, oscillations c deviations, it is because the same individualistic mentality has been applied to nature that gave rise to the abstract concept of freedom. From this mentality also derives the biological theory of evolution, which is a counterpart of the economic theory of competition and the social theory of progress in history; thus "life is everywhere conceived as a function of finalisms and intentionalities, never as a calm expression of itself, in the unsurpassed perfection of typical forms," where it obeys not a causal mechanism but the law of seal and imprint. Let us refrain from applying the reflective categories of individualism: then it will not be difficult to recognize how much more adequate to the reality of nature, than 19th-century evolutionism, is the doctrine of "living evolution," of "evolution understood as the projection, in sensible space, of archetypes," of original forms that exist in and of themselves (almost like Platonic ideas) c which, whatever empirical explanation is given to their empirical manifestation, derive from a special creative act. (Here Jünger notes, horny this partly Goethean theory, which Darwinism has too casually deemed outdated, is after all rejoined by Driesch's modern theory of "variations") (2).

(2) Hans Driesch (1867-1941 ), German biologist c philosopher, taught at the Universities of Heidelberg. Cologne and Leipzig. A continuator of Haeckel's embryological research, he is considered from the philosophical point of view the greatest representative of 19th-century vitalism, which had a considerable influence on the culture of the first decades of the 20th century. He argued resistance of an immaterial principle" which he called "entelechy," exerting a regulatory action on matter. In his view, the physicochemical explanation of biological processes is insufficient to explain them: it is therefore necessary to resort to an individualizing agent of superindividual origin (Ed.)

In this different perspective, the criterion of value is itself different. Not only the example of traditional civilizations but also that of what corresponds to the deepest creative force of nature would thus go to confirm the superior rank proper to the typical; on the other hand, the conception of civilization, of the culture of human perfection and value that is linked to bourgeois individualism would appear as an anomaly: neither the traditional world nor the world of nature would justify it. According to these different perspectives, the superior value of the individual would thus lie not in the Tesser individual, but precisely in embodying and expressing, in and out of himself, a "figure," at a high degree of depersonalization.

On our behalf, we have already mentioned the decisive point of such a position: it is to be seen clearly in what situations what affects the individual or excludes him leads not into the sub-personal but into the super-personal. In principle, the type and all that he creates should lead us beyond both individualism and collectivism, both the isolated ego and the mass: manifestations, the one and the other, of the formless.

Concerning man, it may be added that Jùnger could have drawn even more argument from a further reference to the ancient traditional world, eastern and western: recalling **the** "typical" characters that representative figures almost always had **in** that world: **the** sage, the warrior, the ascetic, the aristocrat and so on. Indeed, in them all the superpersonal and the impersonal appear closely conjoined.

### *Political forms The total space of work*

On the parts of the book where Jùnger considers political-social developments, we shall dwell very briefly, because they have an incidental, provisional and sometimes even problematic character, due to the fact that the book was written before certain political experiences of the more recent past were defined and that from them **we** had **a** precise sense of the deviations that can result where one indiscriminately assumes positions apparently similar to those of *The Worker*, Of which, the Jùnger of the second period has accounted for himself, indeed, we would say, almost beyond the mark.

Looking again at the transitional period, Jùnger notes that the processes corresponding to it already tend to encompass the whole Earth. Although we are still in the revolutionary phase, the dimensions



planetary of them are already visible. "11 Construction site landscape, typical for our time, which is usually designated as industrial landscape, already uniformly covers the earth's surface with its buildings and installations, its cities and districts. There is no longer any nation over which the network of roads and tracks, of cables and airwaves, of airlines and shipping lines does not spread. It becomes more and more difficult to discern what country, indeed what continent, the images fixed by a photographic lens refer to.... About the landscape, we are faced with the same destructions that have affected human society, first in its castes and bodies, then in the forms of bourgeois life. And we know that such destructions are too deep and have causes too well founded for them to be contained, for new harmonies to be achieved before they pass through." "There is no space or life that can escape this process, a process that has long presented all the features of a barbarian invasion in its many forms of colonization, occupation of continents, access to deserts and virgin forests, destruction both of primitive peoples and of cults and ancient laws of life, visible or invisible attack against social and national strata through actions of a revolutionary or military character. Frightening is the number of the sacrificed encountered in such a space, and great is the responsibility. But whoever will be to win or perire, end or triumph will equally herald the rule of the ^Operator."

The scene is thus world-wide: "It has the character of world revolution of technique, the means by which the figure of the Worker mobilizes the world; equal character has Type, by which this same figure is creating for itself a dominating race. In their secret nature the means, the years, the sciences tend toward a domination from one to the other pole, just as the clashes between the great vital units assume the character of world conflicts." In correspondence, even the space proper to the figure and sovereignty of the Worker cannot fail to have planetary dimensions. "Èia super ficie terrestrial, which will be understood as a unity, on the basis of a new sentiment in the process of developing, a sentiment bold enough to push for great constructions and to embrace all the tensions existing in that space."

At present, such tensions are evident and a strange co-existence of the anticipations of a new order with elements of anarchy and disorder is observed. For Jünger, the main cause of this should be sought in the fact that the resistances posed by ideas and forms of life of the previous epoch have not yet been completely eliminated. Thus in the material field not only the tensions but also the disorders, crises and catastrophes of yesterday c of today would be derived from the circumstance, that the

process of industrialization and technologization has had for its first executive organ the individual bourgeois and has been carried out under the sign of bourgeois freedom, that is, of an abstract and unconstrained freedom; hence, the savage regime of competition, of economic struggle, of the indiscriminate distribution of every resource. But it is now becoming increasingly clear that there is a need for measures of a total character, of which only the state, and, properly speaking, a certain type of state, can be capable, which will replace liberal and social democracy. Jünger calls labor democracy (*Arbeitsdemokratie*) or labor state (*Arbeitsstaat*) the new type of political unit, in which should be discerned the form that on the one hand will conclude the subversive, revolutionary and dynamic phase, on the other hand will prepare the static and positive one of the universal sovereignty of the Worker, the reader knowing by now of the meaning given by Jünger to the term "labor," it is superfluous to note that the very designation "State of Labor" should not make one think of the system to which it is customary to apply it in our day. And the same applies, as we shall see, to the term "democracy" as well.

For Jünger, nationalism and socialism would be the principles according to which the political forms of the present transitional period are destined to be oriented. Both present a double face. On the one hand, they have the dynamic and leveling character typical in so many processes of such a period, whereby they must be evaluated in the light not of the positive aims envisaged by the corresponding ideologies, but of their purely mobilizing preparatory action. Nationalism and socialism make this sense when they continue to be based on the concept of individual and mass; as systems they belong, in that case, to the 19th century. The other face they show where the tendency of a new human type to seize power is also betrayed there. In this regard, it would be the active form of the Type, of the Type who desires to be free not *from* something but *for* something, and whose need is to "attain a deeper security than that which anything that is pure armor can give," to set out therefore "toward a supreme definition of individual institutions, sciences and activities on the basis of a life that has come to know its possibilities exactly." Then "the physical forces will present themselves as a system with completely elaborated, precise and adequate characteristics, through which the 'figure' will be reflected in a mobile and manifold reality. And there will be no partial activities, whether of the intellectual or artisan order, which will not come to be delimited and, simultaneously, enhanced by their unfolding in a regime of service."

To the extent that they prepare this, nationalism and socialism are more than just two ideas belonging to the 19th century and, therefore,

ideally, to the past. <sup>11</sup> contribution to the world of labor is offered not where freedom is claimed *against* the state, but where the well-known concept of freedom, in which domination and service make one. Jünger had indicated some forms in which this orientation was heralded alongside an essential transformation of the political-social principles professed at an early time by nationalism and socialism. So even when Jünger does not exclude that in the preparatory phase to infrenate the forces put in the free state by the process of mobilization and dissolution of the previous units authoritarian forms will arise, he does not believe that it is the case to speak of dictatorship. There can be no dictatorship, he says, where freedom and service make one. Since the terms "labor democracy" or "labor state" can only create misunderstandings because of the meaning they have now taken on, it would perhaps be appropriate to speak of organic or hierarchical-functional state to indicate what we are talking about. For example, with regard to property Jünger says that he will not deal with affirming or denying it on the basis of ideological or moral premises, but rather with evaluating it in relation to the extent to which it contributes to total mobilization. "There is nothing to object to private initiative to the extent that it is assigned the rank of a special character of labor in the total order," an order that should not be that of a state bureaucracy, even if the state is conceived as the subject of total mobilization and the total character of labor. A reform of the parliamentary institution in a more or less technical-corporate sense is also hinted at. On the whole, despite the part that, as we have seen, the expression "total" plays in Jünger's terminology, Torientation does not appear to be directed toward "totalitarianism." "The organic construction of the state," says Jünger, "cannot be arbitrary, cannot be the realization of a utopia, nor will it happen that a person or group be assigned functions or tasks for which they are not suited. It will be determined by the metaphysics of the Worker's world, and here the decisive element will be the extent to which the responsible forces will express the figure, as an affirmation of Type, beyond the values of either the individual or the mass." Strictly speaking, it will not even be the case to speak of a "conquest of power" in the violent sense; the new style will itself be revolutionary and represent a power.

This is why Jünger affirms that the type of state envisaged for the transitional period "is not to be confused with a dictatorship even if it used the technique of plebiscites. Any force can exercise a purely dictatorial power: on the other hand, the system in view can only be realized by the Type in its active fonna. The Type is not given pre-

ding arbitrary measures. Its power is delimited by the means and tasks of the world of labor, and its advent is legitimized by all situations that actually contradict the bourgeois concept of freedom and the ways of life based on it."

As for the form in which, depending on the circumstances, the transition to the new type of political unity may be accomplished, it is, for Jünger, secondary; the transition may take place through the work of a minister or party leader in whom all of a sudden the Type in its highest form is manifested, or through a national or social-revolutionary movement, through military intervention or, again, through the initiative of a body of officials, organized following the new law of organic constructions. "Nor will it make any difference whether the conquest of power is accomplished on the barricades or in the cold form of a given labor plan. Finally, it will be irrelevant whether the upheaval takes place amid the acclamations of the masses and through the triumph of a collectivist conception, or whether those who acclaim see in it the victory of the personality, of the strong man." What matters is only the point of arrival according to the objective meaning it will have in the development as a whole: the establishment of an organic and no longer "corporate" system, of a system in which the labor plan replaces the social contract and the constitutional charters, in which, then, the principle of being in place in well-defined and appropriate positions, with the joy and freedom of this being in place, will prevail. "Type will feel responsible before its supreme possibilities, that is, before the total character of labor, the more unified the new structures will be."

The essential factor for the desired upheaval will thus be "the orientation of the Active Type towards the State," that is to say, a political vocation. Then there will be "the transition of parties, movements and institutions to the form of organic constructions, in units of a new type that could also be called Orders, and the characteristic feature of which will be their having a cultural relationship with the figure of the Worker. On such a basis a movement of ex-combatants, a revolutionary social party, an army can equally be transformed into a new aristocracy possessing decisive technical and spiritual means. The difference between such greatness and a party of the old type is obvious: here it is a matter of Tonnare and selection of human substance, while a party strives only to recruit a mass." Precisely in speaking of "Orders," Jünger once again refers to the possibility of a formation of the *Tuomo* such as to be reflected even in somatic features, a possibility held by both military and religious traditions, taking care, however, to point out that, in his idea, this is something quite different "from those fantasies of selection and improvement of the race that were already part

Of early political utopias." In essence, we can say that here we are dealing with the concept of *elites* brought to an existential level as well. Va' training will have to have a rigorous character. There will also have to be schools "in which work must make itself visible alicorn as a way of life and as power, while the merely economic moment will have a subordinate rank, will take a back seat." In one point, it is said that "it is not a matter of despising the intellect but of having it in awe." For example, among other things one will have to have "a more precise instinct about the things one wants to know and the things one *does not* want to know." Elsewhere the *elite* is spoken of "as a kind of guard." In this regard, the analogy with that- Torder of the "guardians" of the Platonic state that someone has referred to as "the armed conscience of the state" naturally comes to mind. One of the essential tasks of this selected group will be "the organic construction within the framework of the masses and energies caught up in unlimited movement, which the process of dissolution of bourgeois society has liberated." Also considered here is an appropriate, coherent, anti-individualistic and anti-ia- narchic use of the stinments of public opinion formation perfected and enhanced by the development of technology "in a space in which the simultaneity, Tunivocityand Togjectivity of experiences grow" (big press, radio, cinema, etc.). Indeed, in many areas these means are now "at large," in the sense that they are in the hands of particular groups and often irresponsible forces that abuse them (a look at what is happening in America may be instructive, we will note). Thus is repeated what had already been said pcr technique in general, namely, that a different, organic use of the new means "is possible only to the Type, because he alone has a metaphysical, figure-conforming relation to technique" c can consider natural the different objective language corresponding to those means. Prospects will then open up for "a formative action such as free opinion has never been able to enact, parallel to that which may extend to the very expression of faces and the timbre of voices." About the double, dangerous face of such possibilities, attested by experiences of yesterday and today, we will not sof stop. It is evident that Jünger's whole system rests on an optimistic assumption, that is, on the idea that the structures contemplated do not carry beyond the world of abstract, individualistic bourgeois freedom only to stand in the service of forces very different from those of a civilization of the type by determining a regression. We will return to this point briefly in our concluding remarks.

Jünger does not believe that for the construction phase it can make any sense to take up earlier pre-bourgeois traditions, for example that-

connectors to the monarchy. "Certain forms are too vulnerable for them to be reestablished once they have been affected." He repeats, that "domination of the situation is to be expected only from forces which, having passed through the zone of destruction, have received new legitimacy in it." The state, or democracy, of labor (which, let us not forget, has a transitional and movement character, it would close one period and open another) may well have some features similar to those of the states that existed before the Third State revolution, but it will differ from it by a control of all the forces liberated as a result of that revolution.

At present the factual situation would be that on the one hand potential tendencies toward domination are observed in many centers, which on the other hand can be spoken of as true domination less today than in any other epoch. One can follow Jünger in distinguishing reality from illusions and ideas as to what has insensibly come to pass in the age of "freedom" and social achievements. A de facto socialism, not to be confused with the ideological one with an internationalist-proletarian program, is doing a dissolutive mobilizing work "such as no dictatorship could ever have dreamed of," and is particularly efficient because it commands general consent and relentlessly appeals to the bourgeois concept of freedom. The overall direction is indicated by Jünger in the following terms:

11 individual is an atom determined by direct influences. There are no longer organic social articulations, of which he or she is a part; the existing ties are simply those of extrinsic and contractual associations, born like mushrooms after the rain, once the divisions of the ancient order have been destroyed. The diversity of parties is fictitious. Both the human material and the means of all parties are essentially homogeneous, just as unique is the result to which competition among parties leads. Any apparent diversity serves only to give the individual the possibility of an illusory change of outlook and the feeling of free choice. In reality, the alternatives here do not involve real decisions, but belong to the very technique of the system. Property and labor are under protectionism, so they have limited opportunities for movement. Moratoriums, subsidies and grants, welfare and social security measures are matched by as many forms of control and regimentation. Public education is schematized. Out of the schools and universities comes a human material formed as uniformly as ever. The press and the major media, sports and technology perfect this uniformized training of individuals. There is, yes, criticism, but even here one encounters a

diversity of mere opinions, not a substantial difference. There are no revolutionary instances today that can do anything about the course of science and technology; one is unable to exclude spindles of a single screw or film device. An independence and power vis-à-vis knowledge, such as those asserted by the great book burnings ordered by Eastern rulers today seem inconceivable. Women struggled to take part in the production process. As for the officially and openly socialized areas, a socialist of 1900 today would be astonished to find that the main interest relates not to wages but to production indices, that in them for sabotaging labor one can be shot like the soldier who abandons his post, that for years provisions have been rationed as in a besieged city. These and many other things that even in 1914 had a utopian character, for our contemporaries have become current. In the said areas in a drastic way, elsewhere in a more attenuated, but no different way, ideological socialism is turned upside down, because once Tostacelo gradually disappears, that is, society ordered into bodies and castes, and even into classes, the positions cleared by the adversary are occupied, and the socialist is no longer the advocate of the oppressed and exploited but the one who inserts himself into the state and exercises command, the original social ideas preserving a simple function of façade.

This picture, drawn by Jünger on the basis of the situation that had already emerged when he wrote his book, could be validly supplemented through the observation of more recent facts. Today it is customary to give great emphasis to the opposition between **the** so-called "free world" where nominally the systems derived from the bourgeois concept of freedom still apply, and the world controlled by communism. This opposition is much more about framing ideologies than practical reality. "Socialism without socialists" (as someone Tha called it), de facto socialization and **Fu-niformization**, the system **of** constraints not felt to be such, only because they have now become natural in a general climate of conformism, reflect, in the "free countries" themselves, the identical process that in crude and cohesive forms can be observed in the "unfree" area. Ideological superstructures aside, there is reason to believe that the further one goes, the more these similarities and convergences, which we have studied more closely elsewhere (3), will become more pronounced.

(3) See Julius Evola, *Revolt against the Modern World* (1934), Edizioni Mcditcnancc, Rome 1969, H, § 16; and *ZZ cycle closes*, edited by Gianfranco de Tunis, J. Evola Foundation, Rome, 1991 (ed.).

Such a spectacle, offered by the general conditions gradually established after the collapse of the ancient, traditional order, and as a result of the leveling principles of the 19th century, c, for I Jünger, that of a plowed land, just waiting for sowing. Resistances being insensibly the premises for the new type of state. Here, too, it is only a question of the transition from the passive to the active phase, the passive phase being precisely that of the "social," the active that of the labor state. In this regard everything will depend on the advent of the active type in the empty spiritual space devoid of a true principle of order. Then all "social" constraints will have a completely different meaning and a different, real legitimacy. At the Type, even situations such as those of war, unemployment, incipient automation, which imprint the seal of meaninglessness on the individual as an individual, will simultaneously present themselves as sources of strength for empowered action. And he will be able to interpret the nostalgia that, in spite of everything, "exists in the dreams of the citizens of the world as well as in the superhumanistic doctrines, in the faith in the miraculous virtues of the economy as well as in the death to which the soldier goes on the battlefields": "the unity of a dominion which, duty before the Supreme, disposes of that sword of power and justice which, alone, guarantees the peace of villages, the splendor of palaces, the union of peoples." As is obvious, the decisive point here is the legitimacy of the principle on which the system of virtual bonds of the passive, social phase must gravitate, changing sign. In this regard, the warning contained in the following words of Jünger is important: "There are some powers from which one can accept as little legal order as one can accept gifts from a swindler without becoming his accomplice."

### *The deadline*

It has already been said that the particular, nationally based labor state, however, for Jünger does not correspond to the final stage; it is to be considered only for the transitional one. One might indeed be inclined to refer it to exceptional situations similar to those for which, in republican Rome, the special institution of dictatorship was contemplated for a limited period, Jünger says. But even if these are exceptional conditions, in his opinion they are such as to exclude any recurrence of previous forms. The changes of things and man required to take place in the force field of the labor state affect too deeply, for a return to the starting point to be conceivable.



One must go further, but the further process will be more an extension than a removal of the new principle. It may well be the case that the reaffirmation of national labor states will lead to closed forms of organization which, in view of the planetary character preconceived for the new civilization, may seem a regress from the internationalization and liberalization proper to many aspects of the present transitional period. "But this will be like the backsliding of those who take the chase for a jump." The attack that all within nations is being waged against caste and class, against the mass and the individual, will extend to the nations themselves to the extent that they still conceive of themselves according to a "bourgeois" model: either atomically sovereign, as the 19th century individual already thought, or aggregated extrinsically into societal forms, without any substantive and higher principle of authority and order, as in the 19th century within each nation public life was conceived in accordance with the social contract. Jünger notes that there are already tendencies and beginnings of supernational constructive formations, involving an attack against the principle of absolute national sovereignties. However, these would be imperfect forms, because there is not yet realized "the identity of power and right, with equal accentuation of the two terms." either one is on the line of imperialism with a subsistent nationalistic undercurrent, so that power overpowers law, or one is dealing with societal structures in which the theoretical definition of a given area of law does not have the counterpart of adequate power and authority (Jünger had in view, for this second case, the Geneva League of Nations; future developments will tell us to what extent the repudiation of it under the species of the UN falls under the same criticism) (4). Nonetheless, these still embryonic and imperfect initiatives would reflect a fact of more general significance, namely, the fact that at the highest level, at the level proper to the figure of the worker, the individual planned landscapes, despite their concreteness or closure, appear as so many particular domains in which a single fundamental process takes place. Thus a domination over our entire planet of that figure would be prepared, and in the tendency of the national forms that still exist to transform themselves into units approaching the Type of the State of Labor, their future inclusion in the unified space of an immense organic construction would already be outlined. The goal would be

{4} As it is known from the examples of the 1980s c 1990s (from Lebanon to Somalia, from Iraq to Bosnia to Albania) the relationship between "law" c "authority" on the one hand, "power" on the other, has been different for TONU because of reasons not only practical but mainly ideological c political (Ed.)

effectively the rule of our planet, as the supreme symbol of the new figure. This alone would give the measure of a security beyond all "work" developments, peaceful or warlike.

We know that for Jünger the total character of work also corresponds to the regime of a residue-free activation of energies. Modern warfare has presented an example of this, as an instance that extends to all domains, blurring any distinction between front and homeland, army and civilian population. War as a primordial, elemental phenomenon uncovered a new space, the dimension of totality, available for the Worker's movements. The dangers lurking in this process, says Jünger, are well known. It is a matter of overcoming them without letting the tension fail, the prerequisite being that different spiritual formation of man which has been sufficiently clarified in the preceding pages.

At present there are points on Earth where "the tendency to embrace life in its totality and shape it is manifest," albeit under the sign of conflicting ideas. Accompanying this are hegemonic ambitions in economic and technical organization, in a regime of competition. Access to a world secure and enclosed in form would not be to be expected before, in one way or another, a decision has come about, before multiple units of the same rank have been succeeded by a sovereign unit of supra-ranking. "It cannot yet be known for which empirical way the problem of such sovereignty will be solved," says Jünger, "precisely because we are in a regime of competition; but whatever the solution will be, to whom it will be implemented, it will always be a realization linked to the figure of the Worker." For our own part, however, we believe that a realistic look given to the present world and also to what may await us in the more immediate future cannot but leave us doubtful about this one, necessary outcome: we will mention it in the conclusion.

The unity of the labor space is the final theme. On it will depend "the regulation of the functions of the economy and of technology, the production and the distribution of goods, the delimitation and resignation of tasks for the nations." "Only starting from that unity will formative actions and symbols be possible, thanks to which every sacrifice will have its fulfillment and its justification: images of the eternal, in the harmonious law of space and in monuments that defy time."

As for the general climate, the background of it is already known to us: "Fervid activity and rest, serious life and light life, what is everyday and the party climate here will not be able to be opposing terms or, at most, will be able to be so only subordinately, at a senti-

unitary element of life": of a life marked by work conceived as that  
^"element of fullness and freedom whose discovery is yet to come."

## Final considerations

As stated at the outset, our intent was to acquaint people with the ideas of *The Worker* and not already to take them as the object of critical examination. Thus, to conclude, we will limit ourselves to some brief general remarks. After all, of the main problems considered by Jünger we ourselves have dealt with them, and having to turn to a critical examination we should for the most part repeat things we have already expounded elsewhere (1).

More than one reader will have reported Pimpression, that Jünger forces the tints, as to diagnosis and prognosis of the times, because the tensions, destructions and elemental processes that form the background of the worker's doctrine do not seem to exist to such an extent today. In one respect, this may be true; among Paltro, one must take into account the fact, that Jünger is also an artist, and that in what he writes the dramatizing imagination has its share. For the rest, it will be necessary to go back to what has already been mentioned in the Introduction. Limited to the so-called "Western" area, if the conception of *The Worker* may seem countercultural or unnecessary, it is because one finds oneself as in an interlude, the

(1) Mainly in *Revolt against the Modern World*, ciL, c *Gluiomini e le Ruvine* (1953), Edizioni Settimo Sigillo, Rome\*. 1990. The problematic, referring to the van dominici an inundation in dissolution, together with that of attitudes that propose themselves to a differentiated human type, c examined I *Riding the / ^t*(1961), Edizioni Mediterranee, Roina\ 1995.

euphoric climate of which should not give rise to too many illusions. One cannot disregard the extent to which even in that area one lives more or less by the day in which a fundamental insecurity lurks behind many comforting prospects or facades of progressistic material ease. Of course, this applies in the first line with regard to the international political situation; in if here it is first and foremost a matter of the regime of tenacious cold war between "East" and "West" with all that it can also blossom into, in addition on our planet multiple are the points where other hotbeds of possible explosions and, therefore, of activation of the elementary.

As for life in general, however, what Jünger mentioned about dealing with emergencies as a reaction to the rationalizing and conformist orders of bourgeois society cannot be taken for granted. Today there would be only the choice to gather adequate up-to-date documentation of multiple forms of compensation, escapism or revolt, pandemic neuroses, a regime of narcotics, gratuitous criminality, even collective openings to the primitive the sexual (one need only recall the significance of *jazz*, music and dance, in our days, a similar phenomena) (2). Everything seems to say that the problem of mentalism is still relevant today, thus also that of an integrated life beyond the cleavages that are the cause of the phenomena now mentioned. Many of the things said by Jünger seem exaggerated only because a sharper, unanesthetized sensibility has made him grasp what is covered by appearances and in cases where a crisis by many is no longer felt by many only because from the acute and sporadic state it has passed to the chronic and general one.

However, as for defining the specific categories for the formation of the new, anti-bourgeois man, Jünger's contribution is incomplete. He indicates an overall direction in relation, above all, to the formula of heroic realism and the civilization of "Type." Beyond that, as already noted, there would be a whole series of specific human problems to be addressed and to be deepened. Thus it will be necessary to refer to what our author wrote in the preface, telling the reader that he would have to go further on his own, the essential being not Tuna or the other particular subject matter dealt with, but "the instinctive security of the grip."

Having clarified this point, we can fix what significance is proper to ascribe to the Jungian theory of labor and of the worker in the

(2) See *Riding the Tiger* cit.

overall view of the times. Here it is necessary to refer to the traditional conception of the involutive course of history, which we ourselves illustrated in the works cited above. Power and the predominant type of civilization descended from one to the other of the four main levels into which, in principle, ancient societies were functionally divided: spiritual authority, warrior aristocracy, bourgeoisie, workers. Apart from the details, it is obvious that societies resting on sacral and pure spiritual authority are long gone from us, and so the cycle of the great warrior dynasties has also ended, while the Third State revolution, together with bourgeoisie and industrialism, has undermined and undermined any order or law of life refactored at those higher levels. Finally, at the crisis of bourgeois civilization is coming to the fore, in general "social" or collectivist frameworks, the Fourth Estate, thus also the principle proper to it, labor, and the corresponding type, the worker, [ the worker. To those who are free of prejudice, all this comes across not as a particular speculation or interpretation, but as the stark reality.

One of the symptoms that we are more or less in the fourth stage today is a generalization of the concept of work, which in any other period would have seemed inconceivable and aberrant. Almost every activity today is thought of and presented under species of work. While in the ancient traditional civilizations the same work could often have the rank of a creative activity and an art, today we are inclined to see even in the arts and intellectual activities a special kind of work, that is, the kind of activity that in other epochs was connected only with the lowest social strata.

Well, one would be inclined to think that in choosing the terms "work" and "worker" and in tracing back to the common denominator "work" all the forms of activity defined by the advent of technology and the corresponding processes of activist mobilization of the world, Jünger has been subjected to the climate of the time, espousing indeed quelTautentical deviation, percui which work is conceived as an aim in itself and as the key to a general vision of life. But if we bear in mind the different content that the term "work" has in his book, if we consider that in it work no longer has an economic and material meaning, that it is associated with heroic realism, that it is no longer a social or collectivist-proletarian greatness, that new, naked relations of anti-bourgeois man with Telc- mentarc are referred to it; finally, that in Jünger the State of labor corresponds in nothing to what that term designates today, but is presented as a rigorously articulated organic structure where even the traditional concept of Order reappears: if one keeps all this in mind, it appears

evident the different sense that Jünger's theory has, as to its direction, its essential orientation. It is as if, taking its starting point from the state of affairs, that is, from a world that tends to be in the sign of labor; there is proposed to be a way of uplift, beyond the lowest point of the descending process. In fact, taken in the Jüngerian sense, labor, worker and labor-state are no longer categories of the Fourth Estate; they appear integrated with values of a heroic, activist and, in a sense, even ascetic-warrior character. Moreover, we have seen that even genetically the actualism of *The Worker* derives neither from philosophical experiences, like that of certain epigones of absolute idealism, nor from applications of Marxism, like that conceived in certain sectors of the communist area; it is an "existential" actualism discovered for the first time by a highly differentiated human type among the experiences of the Great War. Thus it is as if the potentially destructive processes for Third State civilization, or bourgeois civilization, were recognized as having only a tactical value, having as a positive goal not a Fourth State civilization, but structures and laws of life akin in spirit to those proper to Second State civilizations. Not for nothing in Jünger, alongside the most extreme modernism, do Prussian reminiscences recur nonetheless, that is, of a typical Second State tradition. Not only that: for the multiple allusions to the "metaphysics" of the world of labor and the figure superordinate to it, for the examples chosen from traditional civilizations with a despite all sacred background when he wished to give a suggestion of the terminal, no longer dynamic, revolutionary and activist forms of the world of Type, Jünger went even further towards the origins. This, then, is the place and I I significance of Jünger's theory in the problematics of our time.

What is the most topical positive instance of *The Worker*, we mentioned at the outset: to propose a type of ethics, of man's formation (incident even to his vital substance), a style and a vision of life that, while realistic and decidedly anti-bourgeois, are opposite to those of Marxism and Communism. The Type picks up what was acceptable in presenting a certain active and realistic human ideal, alien to the cult of the individual, almost ascetic, immunized against "bourgeois decadentism," which extremist leftist ideologies had already sketched out: detaching it, however, sharply from the framework of Marxist historical materialism. At the same time it also picks up some elements of style surfaced at opposing, anti-communist and national currents of the world revolution, but undermined by myths and reference points that were inadequate and not

screened. In this lies, first of all, the special significance of Jiinger's book.

Once this is acknowledged, one might be led to wonder whether along the indicated direction the terms of a different alternative, a third way, to the antithesis of East and West (which is as good as saying: of the current maximum power centers of Third and Fourth Estate civilization) are not being outlined, and to what extent this third way may have a future.

As for the future, it is worthwhile to bring in problematic factors that feature poorly in the perspectives of the book we have examined. As we have seen, the jùnger gives almost for certain that, obeying his hidden metaphysics, Péra of technique and labor will lead to the world of "Type" and its sovereignty. This is tantamount to saying that there would be no doubt about a future universal civilization, in which the elemental reawakened in the last times will not be excluded but rather assumed and made an integral and positive part of an empowered and even transfigured existence, beyond all bourgeois-type categories, values and ideals. It remains a fact, however, that Pelementary can also burst forth preserving its negative, even demonic valences; and this possibility, sufficiently attested by the last times, with World War II included, in *The Worker* is not considered at all. As we have seen, Jiinger speaks of an ongoing competition fia centers of world power animated by a hegemonic impulse, so much so that he does not rule out further conflicts; he believes, however, that whatever the outcome of such clashes, whoever the victor or vanquished, it will always be the figure of thePworker who will eventually assert himself and order the earth's space. All this is little more than an act of faith. One must still consider the case, that among the antagonists in the struggle there may instead be those who can represent Telementary precisely in its negative and dark valences, making a corresponding, terrible use of all the possibilities offered by the world of technology in order to subjugate not only material forces but also man. At one point Jiinger acknowledges that it has yet to turn out which of the various forms of will to power that feel themselves vocated to worldwide revolutionary action "possesses legitimacy." Now, the criterion of legitimacy for the worker, which is almost only adduced, that of domination over means and technical development, seems, in this respect, obviously insufficient.

It has been said because it is not the case to deal with Jùnger's most recent works. But if one were to consider the book that, in a way, acts as a dividing line between the two periods of this writer's deiractivity - it is a symbolic, key fictional affair entitled *On the*



*marble cliffs* [*Auf den Marmorklippen*, Hamburg, 1939] (3)-it should be acknowledged that Jünger haben ended up considering the negative possibility mentioned above. Indeed, the setting of that book is *ragnarok*, "twilight of the gods." The world of the lowlands and thickets, the world of the "Venni of Fire" whose leader is called *V Oberforster*, in that book actually represents the world of the elemental in its lower and destructive aspects, of violence, ignominy, and disregard for all human value. And in the symbolic story, the unleashing of it overwhelms the opposite world of the Marble Cliffs where the symbols of humanistic disciplines, of 'asceticism, of a patriarchal life subsisted; it overwhelms it, in spite of the resistance organized by the representative of a now exhausted nobility (the prince of Samnyra) having at his side that of an abstract will to power (Braquemart) intended to use the same years as the adversary and, finally, the one who had still gathered around him what remained intact, undermined, in the forces of a land-bound people (Belovar). It speaks, yes, of escaped catastrophe and of a cathedral that, when the times come, will be built having embedded in the foundation a relic brought by them. But for that cycle, referring to the symbolic Cliffs of Marble, the triumph of the powers aroused by the OM^^ that is, of the elemental in an absolutely negative sense, is the last word, and it ends by indicating as the only hope, that "the experience of the destroying fire has been worth to the individual as the threshold by which one passes to an incorruptible world."

Finally, if we were to examine even more recent writings by Jünger, one would hardly find there the maxims of riding the tiger, of discovering the place where the weapon can be grasped from the side that does not cut, of taking oneself not to the areas where one defends but to those where one attacks. Indeed, in *The Way of the Woods* (*Der Waldweg*, Frankfurt, 1945) (4), alongside a curious resurfacing of values that the early Jünger would certainly have stigmatized as "bourgeois," one ends up even studying the way in which the individual can conceal himself and render himself invisibly in a world controlled by totalitarian powers, which is as much to say, alongside structures along the lines of the labor state, where, however, the elemental is manifested in its negative aspects,

(3) See in the appendix the article Evola devoted to the book when it appeared in 1939, and the bibliography for I and vain editions (Ed. C.J).

(4) *Lapsus* for *Der Waldgari*^ C-fr. Bibliography (Ed.).

In fact, the higher meanings that may be latent in the elemental nature of the world of technology and the machine, c in all modern life, remain hypothetical. The change of sign deemed, with good reason, absolutely necessary to make positive the specific transformations already underway has yet to take place. One cannot be at all sure that, as Jünger says, with a certain *pathos*, at the end of the book, Tuomo today "among chaotic zones devotes himself to hardening arms and hearts, knowing even how to renounce the expedient of happiness"; in many cases, what one sees is rather the opposite. Those described, are only possible developments, thus not so much to be ascertained as possibly to be postulated and determined.

Moreover, to take the positions of *The Worker* in positive terms and to consider them as the starting point of a possible constructive way forward one would have to begin by recognizing its limitation and, therefore, the need for supplementation. The limit, Jünger himself can be said to have felt it when in another of his works, *Sirahlungen* (5), he says that *The Worker* should have been supplemented with a "theological" part and when he uses, for the ideas contained in it, Image of a medal that has a strongly minted face while its reverse is formless, flat. As the reader has been able to see, references to an order that transcends the merely chroic-activistic one certainly recur in Jünger, an order that, after all, constitutes the condition for the latter to have deep meaning and justification: for if labor in the scorching, material sense cannot be conceived as an end in itself, after all, one can ask what is the use of all the mobilization proper to labor itself, in the non-current but Jüngerian sense. And the realism attributed to the type should exclude any pseudo-justification on the basis of a confused, inebriated mysticism of\* the action and life.

The most suggestive side of the perspectives of *The Worker* concerns a thoroughly modern, technical, realistic, essentialized world, freed from individualistic mists and constraints, objective, and yet having its own metaphysics. The presence, or absence, of the latter is the decisive point for the major problems addressed. Thus if one is to regard as merely preparatory the problematic action exercised, in the terms examined in its place, by the present de facto socialism and other such phenomena, and if one is to move to the active phase, declaring for the new type of state, and decisive is the problem of the foundation

(5) Published in 1920 See also the final bibliography (N.J.C.).

last of authority, of that chrism or seal which, as Jünger says, "to be directly given also bears the signs that those who are ready to obey can immediately read." The problem becomes even more serious when Jünger says that the competing world superpowers should be succeeded by a superordinate power of a different rank: which is almost a re-proposition of a type of authority along the lines of that which the Holy Roman Empire claimed in the Middle Ages in the face of particular sovereignties.

The plane proper to a higher justification, that is, to the height of these and other problems, can only be the purely spiritual plane. But what room does technology and the presupposition of it, modern-type science, leave for a vision that is not merely activist or needle nistic, but truly spiritual, of the world? It is clear that science of the modern type involves a complete desacralization of the worldview. Its only justification is precisely the pragmatic one hinted at by Jünger in saying that the systems of it are systems of the worker and aim at the mobilization and domination of the powers of reality. In what way, in what terms a spiritual, sacral or metaphysical dimension of reality might return to reveal itself and be concretely asserted in a humanity that conceives of the universe in pure tennines of modern science and technology, thus in a disanimated way, it is difficult to imagine. But the essential point is precisely this; otherwise that talk of "metaphysics" almost ends up as pure sound.

Of "theology" Jiinger, in the quoted passage, moreover, spoke in a generic, indeed analogical sense, without referring to any particular positive religion, thus not even to Christianity. About the latter, he indeed at one point in *The Worker* says that the spiritual orientation of the worker is no less distant from that of a Christian soul than the latter was from the gods of classical Delphantichity. Having chosen "the way of the salamander, which passes through the fire," and the "cutting of the umbilical cord" inherent in heroic realism, make fuomo nuovo find himself, in order to the problem of ultimate meanings and justifications, in a difficult position; he cannot count on what the traditional world (many motives of which, as we have seen, even betray themselves in his best nostalgias, paradoxically associated with the most driven, crude modernity) could offer him to integrate himself in such tennines that the possibility of breakdowns and falls is also prevented in advance and a clear qualitative difference, of rank, is established between i! his right and that of those who may be his antagonists. The type thus has before it an empty spiritual space. His central problem would be to hold firm to positions and to find, at the same time, a

appropriate "theology," differing only in form, not as a level, from those proper to the great traditional currents of earlier civilizations.

If we disregard the final perspectives (which, however, should be clarified from the outset, for only they can differentiate the various orientations from the outset), the value of Jünger's theories in relation to today's world can be recognized in terms of ethics. In the face of economic materialism, in the face of the ideals of a mundane prosperity almost of cattle and the corresponding bourgeoisification of the very groups that had flaunted the uniform of the anti-bourgeoisie, there is no doubt that the Jüngerian worker represents a higher type: there is reflected, at least, an anti-edonistic and even anti-demonistic spiritual attitude of the rank-and-file fighter of the Great War, in the terms of a positively, impersonally formative force. Men ready to follow not those who promise but those who demand, this would certainly be the premise of a superior civilization. If such a human type were then also so much, as to control the unlimited development of means, to impose a limit now, so that they really stand in the service of that which is really worth pursuing, another desirable premise for a new order would be realized. To essentialize, to "lighten the baggage" by setting aside what has been recognized to be merely empty, surviving form, kept alive by prejudice and conformity, to elect therefore a realism not at all synonymous with materialism, is, again, a positive trait. Finally, if one has in view the space that in the so-called free countries has a generation to be said to be not burned out, according to Tabusata's discounted formula, but rather landslided, disintegrated or traumatized, if one has in mind all the forms of compensation derived from the lack of a deep sense of existence and of laws of life capable of organizing the deepest, most elemental layers of being; if one takes all this into account, the principle of "work" in the Jüngerian sense, that is, in that of a being completely in place beyond the antitheses of the individual, in an intolerance of evasions and in a new freedom, quite different from anarchy although it has passed through anarchy, this principle also presents itself as a positive point of reference, and if tendencies in such a direction were to be announced in today's world, according to what Jünger believed in his time to be discernible in some sectors of the new generation (albeit "as tactical flags intended to indicate the direction of march to armies still far away"), this could only count as a favorable symptom.

Achieving such lines, would be the first step. The further step, related to the ultimate problems and meanings of a specifically spi-

ritual just above mentioned, it seems difficult to imagine {for the reasons said) without starting from some unforeseeable fact of a non-simply human order. Indeed, even in a world that was not that of contemporary materialism but already that of the Worker and the Type, it is hard to see how the dimension of the not merely human, the metaphysical, sacred or transcendental dimension, as it may be, could fit in, to rectify and elevate it: fit in, of course, in existential terms and not already as some marginal theory or new belief.

In the field of civilizations there is often a repetition of what, according to mutation theory, happens in biology: a certain, unpredictable level break of the principle that imparts a new orientation and gives a new entelechy to existing vital matter. In part, this was also foretold by Jünger when he took up the doctrine of the "figure": the "figures," which are not generated by history, but by their manifestation determine history. One would have to take this idea on a higher, truly metaphysical plane, but without deluding oneself that it is more than a postulation in order to a condition that, right now, nothing can tell us if and when it will be realized: because, to stick to an objective consideration, already the transition from the passive, problematic and dissolving forms of the modern world of technique and number to the active and legitimate forms of "Type," is still far from being guaranteed.

## Note

The present essay had been fully written and passed into print (1) when a new work by Jünger, entitled *Al muro del tempo (An der Zeimauer)*, came out. Unlike the other more recent ones, of various gleanings, it to some extent takes up the ideas of *The Worker*: so much so that in the reprint of the complete works of the A., announced by the publisher Ernst Klett of Stuttgart, it will be published together with that book in the same volume.

Here we will only mention the new work (2), because it adds little to what we are interested in. For it is particularly of the metaphysics of history, if not also of eschatology, that it essentially deals, with views of a fairly hypothetical and often fanciful character. We shall approach a "cosmic civilization," Faction of the Faction of Man (of the ^"worker") being now in the process of affecting the forces of the world (ultimate developments of science and technology), while the "primordial background" of the real cotnincerebbe to move to generate new structures of being. Hence, an "anteic" (from Antaeus) anguish and restlessness announced here and there. Hence the sense of "pangs of a

(1) This, of course, refers to the first edition which bears September 23, 1960 (Ed.) as its printing date.

(2) Usia broader examination of the work-which Evola himself translated pcr rodent Volpe -c in the Appendix (Ed.).

initiation" to be given to all the crises & the destruction caused by the ultimate civilization and that almost of an obscure offering for all the suffering and sacrifices of the Ultimate Humanity. Hence, finally, the absolute loss of the meaning that all previous concepts of human life already had. "Wall of time" is understood analogously to "wall of sound," that is, in the sense of a limit destined to be broken and transcended. Jünger says that just as prehistoric and "mythical" times were not a part of our own time (of "historical" time), but a qualitatively different time (the idea had already been developed by the second Schelling), likewise what is historical time is about to end, & a limit separates us from something equally new & imminent, trans-historical, discontinuous with respect to all that we have known as "history" and the corresponding categories.

Jünger also hints at what we were saying in our final remarks, in two points. First of all, the "end of the world" is understood by him as the end of a world (of a cycle), in a sense that may be either catastrophic or positive (with overcoming of the solution of continuity and caesura); secondly, in connection with this, he speaks of a test to which man will be put, because of a necessary process: that of being able to leap over the "wall of time," disgorging freely into the new world. In a certain way, Jünger also refers to the necessity of that unpredictable "mutation," of that essential, spiritual and existential modification, which we refer to as the condition for the world of the worker" to receive a superior chrism in its eventual establishment. In addition, he hints at the idea that new ("metaphysical") powers lurk behind the abstract and mechanical forces of our time, as "presences" already conjured up, invisible counterparts to the transformations taking place.

The book contains here & there valid insights and considerations, mingled however with fantasies & dubious speculations. As a systematic & conscious it is not at the level of *The Worker*. Above all, in order to deal seriously with the metaphysics of history (conception of time, doctrine of the four ages of the world, eschatology etc.), personal views, even if of a shrewd & artist's mind, cannot suffice; instead, one must refer to objective, traditional knowledge, as did, for example, a René Guénon and his group and as we ourselves have tried to do, dealing with similar problems. As noted above, the essential problems to which we have brought the reader's attention in the previous pages, namely those of the immanent formation of a superior human type in the face of the liminal, even destructive, situations of the modern world, in *At the Wall of Time*, however, have not been further developed. Without the hypothetical eschatological and diagnostic background, this issue was taken up by us particularly in the previously mentioned book, *Riding the Tiger*.

## *APPENDIX*

Other writings of Julius Evola on Ernst Jünger  
(1943-1974)





## The "Worker" and the Marble Cliffs

Some time ago a book by Ernst Jünger, a writer who was increasingly to establish himself as one of the most significant in contemporary Germany, came out. The book is entitled *Der Arbeiter*, that is, "The Worker" or, if you prefer, "The Worker": it is intended to identify the face of the forces who are trying to create for themselves revolutionarily a new world. In this period, in which many things again take on a problematic character, it is not without interest to take up Jünger's considerations and also to present the connection with which they stand with the ideas expressed in fictional form in another, much more recent work of his, now also published in Italian translation: *On the Marble Cliffs* (1).

The center of the previous book of Jünger is constituted by the examination of forms, in which is accomplished, according to a fatal, incoercible necessity, the overcoming of the bourgeois and individualistic *Pétra* at a new irruption, in the modern world, of what he calls the "elemental."

(1) The book *Der Arbeiter* came out from the Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt in Hamburg, so did the German edition of *Suite scogliere di marmo (Auf den Marmorklippen)*, the first Italian translation of which, edited by Alessandro Pellegrini, and bearing as appendices fragments of other works by Jünger, came out this year from Mondadori.

(The appendix of a hundred pages later eliminated in the later Rusconi and Guanda editions of the novel included excerpts from *Soggiorno in Dalmazia e il cuore avventuroso*. The novel was extraordinarily successful in Italy: published in 1942, it had one reprint a year until 1945-N.D.C.).

deserve," that is, of the deeper forces of life and reality in general. The constant concern of the bourgeois world was to create an airtight security belt against such forces. Precisely "security" in life was its myth, which the religion of "reason" was to legitimize and consolidate: reason, for which the elemental is identified with the absurd and the irrational. Loving and wanting destiny, struggle, danger, all appeared to the bourgeois as meaningless, as an aberration to be eliminated by means of adequate pedagogy. But deeper forces took over again. The elemental, which like a volcanic fire always smoulders under the contingent constructions of those who want comfortable and secure living, has reasserted itself in the modern world, and, at it, a new human type, a new generation and a new civilization, devoid of relations with the previous one, arises (pp. 45-46, 50-53).

Such a new generation is precisely characterized by the fact that it knows "elementalism" and stands with it in a relationship, of which the bourgeois and the civilization of the Third Estate did not even have a suspicion (p. 14). It constitutes a kind of protest realized directly in an action seeking dangerous life. Its watchword is a "heroic realism." 11 his style is totalitarism. the "total mobilization" of life, on all levels. In his new world, precisely the "elemental" is an integral part. It produces a kind of catharsis, of purification, in its manifold destructions. It imposes on man an absolute commitment. It gradually enucleates, beyond all that is "individual" or "mass," what Jünger calls the "absolute person" (p. 132). Having made clear the high betrayal that "spirit" has consummated against life, it is now made clear that it has found its sanction in a high betrayal of spirit against spirit itself, through a process of self-consumption (p. 40). Total mobilization is, for Jünger, taking oneself beyond the oppositions of idea and material, blood and spirit, of power and right, of individual and collectivity, which are all concepts tied to this or that partial perspective of the previous century (p. 42). It is also to have discovered anew that life and worship make everything (pp. 43, 154), and that there are things far closer and more important than principle and end, life or death (p. 79).

Thus, it is a "heroic substance" that has passed through the school of anarchy, that has experienced the destruction of the ancient bonds and thus can realize its claim to freedom in a new era, in a new space and through a new aristocracy (p. 66).

On the subject of freedom, this new human type feels-contrary to the predominant views in Third Estate civilization-that power and service

Are one and the same. Obey, for it, means the art of hearing; order means readiness for action, for command, which like a dazzling ray runs from the top to the root. Thus it refers order and freedom not to "society" but to the state. For its articulation, the model is constituted not by the "social contract," but by the style of the army. And the supreme degree of its strength is reached, when there is no longer any doubt in regard to the function of leading or of following, of the *Führerium* or of the *Gefolgschaft* (p. 13). The new type no longer belongs to an association or a "party," but to a "movement" or a "following"; it knows no rallies, but marches (p. 97). Dying, for it, has become an easier, less important, less tragic thing (p. 141). In its new world, the character of totalitarianism is also expressed in the fact, that the individual, whether he wants it or not, has his own responsibility in the whole, in which he is taken up (p. 144).

To characterize this new type Junger uses the term *Arbeiter*, that is, worker or laborer. Although he warns that such a term is to be understood "organically" in that in the course of the exposition it takes on various meanings (p. 15), nevertheless there is the question, whether it is not based on a fundamental misunderstanding. The author points out that it is not the advent of a given social stratum, but of a new figure, which interpenetrates every particular aspect of existence with a new meaning, just as in other times all forms of life were interpenetrated, for example by the chivalric sense (p. 64). He adds that as "work" he means "the speed of the fist, of thought, of the heart, of life by day and by night, science, love, art, faith, worship, war: work is the vibration of the atom and the force that moves stars and solar systems" (p. 65). It is therefore as Burzio would perhaps say - a matter of "demiurgicity," a figure characterized precisely by a direct, active, total relationship with the forces of reality, with the "elementary" in itself and outside itself. It is not, however, that with this the misunderstanding ceases: on the contrary, it is confirmed by precise references to the modern world of the technical, as we shall immediately see. And Junger makes it clear that there are, by now, only two criteria: that which has the "museum" as its point of reference and that which has the "workshop" as its point of reference instead (p. 166).

Although Junger does not identify the general type of the "worker" as an industrialist, he recognizes that the appearance of the latter has helped to make manifest the impossibility of the continuation of the old forms (p. 74). It is in the world of technique that he most precisely sees the new type and the new world take form. The world of technique for him is precisely to be understood as the symbol of a panic figure-

lare, of that of the "worker": it is the mode, "by which the figure of the worker mobilizes the world" (pp. 72, 150). "Work" thus becomes a totalitarian symbol, it is the body in which the elemental and the power is manifested today, with which a new human type, a new race will have to measure itself.

Jünger sees well the destructions that the mechanistic and technical element accomplishes. But this for him constitutes only the contingent aspect of a much larger and ultimately positive phenomenon. Man, he says, should not try to excuse his impotence by emphasizing the lifeless character of the means he uses. The means will reveal a hidden meaning at the point when they are fully mastered, so that they become symbols of a supra-ordinate power (pp. 192-3). Then the legitimacy of the revolution provoked by them will also become apparent. Then technology, with all its achievements, will appear as an armor for unsuspected revolts and unsuspected struggles, to be held no less dear than the ancient knight held his sword (p. 44). The phase of destruction will be replaced by a real and visible order with the advent of that new race, which will be able to speak the new language of technology not in the sense of mere intellect, progress, utility or convenience, but as an "elementary," intensely real language; and such will also be the point, at which the face of the "worker" will reveal its heroic features (p. 162). The title of legitimacy of the "worker" will consist precisely in the mastery of forces that have become overpowering and in the control of absolute movement (p. 76). One must make oneself capable of presenting the spiritual forms and the "metaphysics" from which the metal and human masks of our time are moved (p. 124).

Of "human masks," moreover, Jünger also speaks in a specific sense. A fundamental character of the new world, of the world of the "worker," in fact, would be given by the substitution of *type* *alf individual*; Whereas the hierarchy of the 19th century had individuality as its measure, the criterion of the new century is the greater or lesser correspondence to a type, which is established everywhere through a silent revolution. To that type belongs impersonality. It is not irreplaceable: it is such, that one fallen can be immediately replaced by others, in the spirit of the same tradition or function (pp. 144-148). As the individual disappears, so too, for that matter, does I a mass as mere quantity—we move instead toward new organic and even qualitative formations. There is to be noted an impoverishment, a certain emptiness, a certain uniformity, faces that take on precisely the characters of masks, detachment from "color," from "variety" even in clothes, gestures, rituals, increasing space that the element "number" and geometry take in life; but

all this expresses an essentialization, a realistic empowerment (pp. 110-122). The criterion is now objective action, without grand words, revolution without rhetoric. And even as a real, social revolution, it is now no longer a matter of masses confusingly pouring into the squares, but of a group of determined men taking over the vital ganglia of a city following a precise technique (p. 110). Men are again typical c important there where they, because of the absence of intellectual or sentimental complications, least believed they were: in real life, in streets and squares, in houses and backyards, on airplanes and underground railroads, where people work. It is here that we begin to present a humanity that already moves following an invisible and wordless command (pp. 131-2).

Whether or not one wants to speak of a new barbarism," says Jünger (p. 56), "the important thing today, however, is to note the new, untamed current of elemental forces that has taken over our world. At the deceptive securities of the old arrangements, they are too close and too destructive for us to understand their ultimate meaning. Their form of appearance has of anarchy; it is like the bursting of a volcanic underground. Those, however, who believe, that such a process can be curbed by ordinances of the ancient style, belong to the race of the defeated, of those who are doomed to destruction. Instead, the need arises for new ordinances, for ordinances based not on the exclusion of danger, but on a new union of life with danger. The new world of the "worker" for the individual may mean not an alleviation, but an aggravation: but he will also be given new strength to master the new burden (p. 65). Nor should we be fooled by the leveling to which men and things are subjected today. It means nothing more than, the realization of the lowest degree, of the basis of the world of "work." It depends on this, that the process today often appears, in a predominantly passive aspect, as a thing undergone. But the more destruction and transformation proceed, than equally the possibility of a new organic construction will become visible (p. 148).

Jünger actually speaks not only of "unknown soldiers" as a symbol, but also of "unknown dukes" (p. 100). In the world he calls of "work" new trials, new selections are carried out: trials of an extreme, naked, almost metallic coldness, in which heroic consciousness masters the body as an instrument by imposing on it a series of complex actions beyond the limits of the instinct of preservation. What one performs anonymously in this sense, inactions that no one will know about, in a burning airplane or in a scuttled submarine, brings gii

same characters as other evidence that, in varying degrees, extends to the whole world of "labor" and the new "elementarity," as naked, silent selection of essences (p. 107). In this way Jünger thinks of a new aristocracy. The problem of power for him is that of a firm, exact unity of life, of an unequivocal "being"; power is Expression of this "being," without which insignia and symbols are, in the new world, meaningless. Power is being: one recognizes it in those whose stature is exactly adequate to the means and weapons they use (pp. 69-70). 11 Secret of true leadership lies not in promising, but in *Tesifying*. To sacrifice oneself, for Tuomo, is a joy: and the highest art of command consists in pointing out purposes, which are worthy of such a sacrifice (p. 71), Jünger thought of an *elite* as an essential and active condensation of the way of being of the "worker" in terms of a kind of guard, of new backbone of warrior formations, like a selection, which can also be called an Order (p. 109): and indeed in the ancient Orders T impersonality, the primacy of the end over the person and the principle of selection were closely related constituent elements.

The character of "totalitarianism" of the world of "work" makes, for Jünger, any distinction fi a "city" and "country" quite relative, tends, even in this regard, to a unification of types. Equally relative is, in his manner, mobilization in peacetime and mobilization in wartime, and, in this, the distinction between combatant and noncombatant (it is to Jünger, let us note in passing, that we owe the first views on "total war"). The world of "work" commits *born Weave, thousand* life, And loves, wants this total commitment, to the limit, to the point of destruction.

Thus we also speak of a faith that can win while having no dogmas or in a world, which knows no gods; of a knowledge, which needs no principles; of a homeland, which by no force in the world can be occupied (p. 92). Considering the uniform motion of the new forces, the precise, geometric forms of pyramid-like orderings, and the sacrifices and victims, more numerous than any Inquisition or any Moloch ever required and whose numbers increase with deadly certainty for every step forward; considering all this Jünger wondered how one could not present something fatal and worthy of veneration behind the veil of causes and effects (p. 45). It is not to oppose the new reality, but to overwhelm it, to carry it further forward. It is like a being in full trajectory. Children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of men who even in fi-ance of doubt harbored distrust, one marches on lands where life is threatened by temperatures

extreme. The more the individuals and the masses will be exhausted, the greater will be the responsibility that falls to only a few. There is nowhere to evade, nowhere to discard, nowhere to retreat. Instead, one must intensify the violence and speed of the processes in which one is caught. And it is then good to present that behind the immense dynamic of these times lies an invisible center (pp. 193-194).

In order to the organization of the world of labor on the most immediate plane, where this word has its normal sense, Jünger was among the first to speak of an "imperial space" - *imperialer Raum* - as the place proper to a "plane" resting essentially on the political principle, on the state (p. 277).

Elsewhere in the book, he had spoken of three main phases of the unfolding of the new world of the "worker": the first would unfold through the 1914-18 World War; the second would correspond to the "world revolution" (in a general anti-bourgeois sense); for the third phase, he had thought possible the re-precipitating into warlike forms (p. 153).

The first edition of the book in question came out in 1932. Jünger can therefore be said to have been a good prophet. Important, therefore, would be an examination of his ideas in the light of the balance of the same history of these last years. It is possible that Jünger himself has done so in his very recent book, *On Marble Cliffs*, about which we shall briefly say, after a few critical remarks to the order of ideas so far set forth.

Jünger was certainly optimistic about the world he felt was coming up and to which he had attached the symbol of the "worker." Generalizing, as we have said and seen, the meaning of "labor" and "worker," he had explicitly stated that workers' movements are not, as the "bourgeois" claim, movements of slaves, but hidden movements of gentlemen, *verkappte Herrenbewegungen* (p. 41). We have seen that he does not want to identify a "worker" to a given social class, but will make it a general type, the center of a given worldview. With this, nothing of the ambiguous side of his view remains removed, however. For in the traditional world, just as the spiritual aristocracy, the warrior aristocracy and then the bourgeoisie itself, as hierarchically ordered castes, corresponded to various types and various worldviews, so too the "worker" was not a class abstraction in the modern sense, but a well-defined figure. The fact, then, that Jünger was induced precisely to choose the symbol and designation of "worker" for the newer civilization beyond the ruins of the bourgeois world or the Third Estate, this fact does not seem to us accidental or arbitrary, but one more confirmation of a truth presented by various authors,



i.e.: today a form of civilization (with its corresponding worldview) seeks to take over, linked to what until yesterday was the Fourth Estate, a civilization characterized, therefore, not by the suppression of the other social strata and of every domain of activity other than that of the Fourth Estate (i.e., of "work"), but by a transformation in the sense of "work" of all human explication. This is exactly what Jünger says when he speaks of the "totalitarian character of labor, which is the way in which the figure of the Worker begins to interpenetrate the world" (p. 99). Which means that, far from being a "new" world in a positive sense, what Jünger foresaw is rather a twilight world, the stage at which we reach after the dissolution of civilizations centered either in the spiritual leader, the warrior monarch, or the Third Estate.

Dissolution and leveling, says Jünger, are but contingent and initial aspects. We agree. The world of the Fourth Estate can also know hierarchy and selection. Indeed, it may even know a discipline, an asceticism, a heroism. One considers the Bolshevik phenomenon, now that various aspects of it previously concealed by overly naive propaganda are visible, and confirmation of this will undoubtedly be forthcoming. Further developments in this direction are also conceivable in frameworks other than the properly Bolshevik-communist one. But the substance remains the same. Each value goes to have the imprint of what, in a normal hierarchical edifice, corresponded to the lowest elements, to the Fourth Estate.

The phenomenon of the irruption of the "elemental" into the modern world is real, and real are several of the consequences sharply highlighted by Jünger. It is important, however, not to lose sight, here, of the right points of reference. That is, one should not be under any illusions about the predominant quality in the "heroic," activist and tragic substance that has surfaced in breaking the ephemeral constructions and myth of "security" of the Third Estate era. As much as he is but a "drawing-room philosopher" obsessed with the importance of his own person, even so, what Keyserling wrote in his book *The World Revolution and the Responsibility of the Spirito* (also published in an Italian translation, by the publisher Hoepli) is completely accurate, into the "telluric" and "infernal" character of this revolution, and yet also of all the sacrifices, heroisms, disciplines, and asceticism it implies. So even accepting in full the generalization of the concept of the "worker," eliminating, for the moment, any direct or indirect reference to an advent of the Fourth Estate, always we find ourselves before-in this new emergence of the "elemental" and of those who have shifted the center of their lives in it to qual-

thing of ambiguity and concern. And today one can see this as clearly as ever, because one has the sense of great forces that are already organized ^totalitarianly|| and -totalitarianly|| are -mobilized|| -in the sense of Jünger-, which therefore now have behind them the phase of chaos and revolutionary destruction, but which nevertheless appear as if left to their own devices, thrown into a tragic affair that one cannot see how it will be completely controlled and brought back to a truly higher meaning.

Instead, as we have seen from our exposition, it is in the hope of this higher meaning, brought by a stormy and grave affair of destiny, and by the "elemental" latent in the world of technology and the machine, that Jünger's conception and his prognosis of the new civilization beyond the Third Estate had its center.

And now it falls to talk about the *Marble Cliffs*, It is the general opinion, that such a book is a *Schlusselroman*, that is, a key novel, in which the events and the characters themselves have a symbolic character and refer to upheavals and forces taking place in our days, thus having the value of fantastic means of expression for a precise idea.

The center of this new book, written by Jünger in 1939, is the contrast between two worlds. The one is that of the "Marina" and the pastures, overlooked by the "Marble Cliffs"; it is a patriarchal and traditional world, where life and nature have for a counterpart a superior wisdom and an ascetic and sacral symbol incorporated eminently, in the novel, by the figure of Father Lampro. In contrast to the world gathered at the "sea cliffs" stands that of the swamps and forests, where a fearful, diabolical figure rules, whom Jünger calls *YOberfor-ster* (translated as "Forestaro"): c, this, an "elemental" world of violence, cruelty, ignominy, and contempt for all human values.

The tone of the fantastic-symbolic affair described with masterful artistry by Jünger is "twilight of the gods." The world of the "Forester" eventually overwhelms that of the Navy and the Cliffs of Manno. The Navy's civilization and customs are altered by shrewdly directed processes of corruption, anarchy infiltrates it and finds no compunction in men of action who are truly capable of asserting themselves, of coping with nihilism and destruction. At the moment of greatest danger, two men try to take the initiative for liberating action. The one, Braquemart, embodies a will to power and a Nietzschean-style theory of the superman and superrace, a theory that here resolves itself into a form of nihilism and is doomed in its abstract cerebrality and lack of spontaneous greatness to play into the hands of the adversary, whom Braquemart tries to counter by using his

same weapons. Jünger, in this regard, writes: "In this sphere it was necessary to intervene and therefore ordinators and new theologians were needed, to whom evil was known in its appearances and roots; and only then would the cutting of the consecrated swords, like lightning in the darkness, be of benefit. For these reasons individuals were to live with even greater clarity and strength of mind, according to a stricter discipline, *witnessing a new legitimacy*. Even those who want to win a short race subject themselves to a suitable discipline; in here were at stake the supreme goods, spiritual life, freedom, human dignity itself. To be sure, Braquemart thought they were, such, vain talk and planned to repay the old man [the "Forester"] in equal coin, but he had lost his self-respect, and hence all ruin has among men its beginning."

The other figure from the Navy world is the Prince of Sanmyra, a symbol of a nobility now exhausted. The signs of traditionally innate greatness, nobility of spirit and readiness for bold and heroic sacrifice are coupled in him with the decadence proper to that which lives solely as a legacy of the past, as an echo, as something that is less ours than a property of the dead. Hence Funione of the two figures as that of a twilight tradition conjoined with an artificial theory of power, more capable of enhancing the desert than of endowing the former with new strength. Therefore, the two alone attempted a desperate coup d'état against the Forester, but lost their lives in it and could not stop the catastrophe.

Nor can the descent of Belovar, he who represents the residual forces of patriarchal civilization still intact, stop it. The work of subterranean disintegration has now gone too far, the "fireworms" organized by the Forest-worms are now too numerous and too powerful. The unleashed forces of the forest and swamp world cannot be restrained. Belovar falls in the Fultimate, desperate battle, after which iron, fire, death and destruction befall the entire world of the Navy and Marble Cliffs. Father Lampro, who is the guardian of Mystery, sacred tradition and contemplation, disappears in the flames in the collapse of his temple. His last act is to bless the severed head of the Prince of Sanmyra, sacrificed in the extreme attempt and almost transfigured, in it, by a higher light. Also burning is the Hermitage of Ruta, refuge of the scholar and the wise, a symbol of humanistic discipline and almost Goethian contemplation of nature. From the entire Navy world, now in flames, only someone manages to escape, with a ship, carrying with him, like a relic, precisely that severed head, which only very

later, embedded in the foundation stone, was to serve as the foundation for a new Cathedral. But for that cycle, for that world bound to the Marble Cliffs, the triumph of the powers unleashed by the Forester is the last word. And Tunica's hope in tragedy is that the very experience of the destroying fire is, for the individual, a principle of rebirth, the threshold for passing into an incorruptible world.

In the ideal world proper to Jünger's new symbolic book there is thus almost a return to values, which in the previous one were certainly not in the foreground. Many elements suggest, that we are dealing here with a kind of negative balance precisely from the "elemental" world, and yet, to a good extent, also from the world of the "worker." The unleashed forces destroying the cities of the Navy, having overwhelmed both the generous but also exhausted survival of the civilization of the Second State, and the artificial, nihilistic representatives of the simple will to power, and finally, in Belovar, the few energies still forthright and bound to the earth - these forces of the "Forester" give well the impression of the world of "total mobilization" (2), of the world of the Fourth State and of revolutionary "tellurism" that has come to the limit revealing in the end its true nature. With the advent of such forces in the lands of the "Navy" it is not the world of the bourgeoisie, of individualism or of the Third State that collapses, but a world of quality, of personality, of asceticism, of mystery and sacred tradition, of "culture" in a higher sense. It is the same Jünger, already an advocate of total war almost extreme instance to itself, who now recognizes that "warrior courage is not the supreme value"; that it is inevitable to go to the world of the "forest" and the Forest when, along with force, one does not possess a higher principle, a legitimacy, so to speak, from the Tao, such as that symbolized by the figure of the Tasceta swept away himself in the collapse of the burning temple, after the last blessing.

Minus its apocalyptic sides, Jünger's new book thus has profound content. A clairvoyance pervades it, superior certainly to that of the *Der Arbeiter* period, appropriate to the seriousness of these times. The phenomenon of the irruption of the "elemental", as we have already said, is real: and real is also the process of enucleation of a new type, realistic, heroic, impersonal, capable of absolute control and action, leaning toward a total assumption of life. Even if the world of this new type does not quite correspond to that of the "Fore-

(2) Reference to a famous 1931 Jüngerian essay, *Die totale Mobilmachung*. Cft. Bibliografia (M.d.C.).

staro," even if it has left behind it the period of destruction and anarchy, and in its advent not only various forms of that of the Fourth Estate are celebrated, even so the horizons will not clear, and a fearful fate will not be prevented, until as a counterpart there will be precisely the spiritual tradition in the highest sense, an Order not in the first assumption only activist-guerrilla of Jünger, but precisely with reference to transcendent values, to the secret ranks of something "which is not of this earth" and which perhaps until today has still been guarded. The face of the age to come will certainly depend on the extent to which, despite everything, this possibility is realized.

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## A missed revolution: "the conservative revolution"

Those who today judge the political movements that have characterized the most recent Germany - we mean those that began after World War I, developed in various ways during the Weimar Republic leading up to the advent of Hitler's Third Reich, following the opposite direction to Marxism are routinely content with simplistic formulas, such as fascism, crypto-fascism, Nazism, racism: formulas, which may indeed be useful in petty polemics, but which do not at all account for reality, which is far more complex and differentiated. In fact, in the aforementioned period, multiple influences acted in Germany that can certainly not be identified with National Socialism as it is ordinarily known. Rather, the main ones of them can be traced back to a current which can be characterized by the formula *conservative revolution*, and which appears largely independent of Hitlerism, although interference with it was not lacking and if with it in some cases it was channeled. Of all this, generally, outside Germany little is known. Hence the contribution made by the young Swiss historian Armin Mohler is valuable with a recent work that is very well documented and systematic, which is intended precisely to shed light on the exponents and ideas of the "conservative revolution" in Germany, considering it essentially in the period from 1918 to 1932, i.e.

until the time of Hitler's advent ( 1 ). A briefing on Mohler's research we believe may also be of interest to the Italian reader.

"Conservative revolution" is a concept that, partly corresponding to the French concept of *contrerévolution* (Maurras, DePoncins), cannot be well understood without having regard to the particular historical situation in Germany and, in general, in the countries of Central Europe. As indeed Mohler rightly points out, in such countries the whole ideological world that is traced back to the French Revolution has never taken as much hold as in most of the remaining European nations; on the contrary, it has often been felt as something foreign, as something distorting one's own older and more straightforward tradition. On this basis in various quarters it was precisely a motion of reaction - however, "reaction" not in the vulgar sense proper to class polemic, but rather as a need for revolutionary renewal, for the removal of exogenous and flaking dross and influences, without wishing to simply restore the *ancien régime* and return to the *ancien régime*. Therefore, in the formula mentioned (which seems to have been first used in 1927 by Hofmannsthal) the term "revolution" takes on a sense quite different from the progressive one; it does not designate a violent "evolutionary" phase, but a restorative action starting from perennial values. Consecrating oneself faithful to those values, reacting by recovering from the origins - such is the attitude-base. Moller van den Bruck, who is one of the leading exponents of this current, therefore wrote: "Conservatism has eternity for itself.. To be conservative does not mean to be attached to what has been, but to live from what always applies" (p. 149).

Van den Bruck himself had coined the formula "third *Reich*," which was later to be assumed-abusively and usurpatorily, according to various exponents of the "conservative revolution"-by Hitlerism. It was that for the current in question Wilhelmine Germany itself (corresponding to the Second *Reich*, the First *Reich* having been the Holy Roman Empire) did not appear as a realization of the idea it defended. Behind a feudalism that was only a façade, and at much rhetoric, in Wilhelminism multiple economic and social developments would rather have created forms that were far from expressing what

(1) A. Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932, Grundriss ihrer Weltanschauung* F. Vorwerk Verlag, Stuttgart, 1951. As many as 60 pages of the book are devoted to a thorough documentary bibliography

(Tr. it.: *La rivoluzione conservatrice in Germania* / 9757932, Akropolis/La Roccia di Erec, Florence, 1990. Translation conducted on the 1972 edition of the book and lacking bibliography - Ed. note),

some called *das geheime Deutschland*, the "secret Germany" (2). The rebirth, or, rather, the impetus for a rebirth was to occur only with World War I and after it. In this regard, it goes so far as to say that the victory of Wilhelmine Germany would be the defeat of this "secret Germany." War as an *experience* here is interpreted as catharsis, as a process of purification and liberation (Thomas Mann): destruction of rhetoric, false idealisms, grand words (H. Fischer) and only in that sense nihilism ("positive nihilism"); a school of a "heroic realism" that requires the person to take himself to that depth of being, where no distinction can reach (E. Jünger). The military defeat should therefore have been followed by recovery, the third *Reich*, the real one, based on an almost esoteric tradition, not having for its end the mere conquest of political power, but a spiritual revolution and fidelity to the pure idea. All this, therefore, manifested itself only in more or less underground and dispersed veins, in small groups, circles, "Orders," magazines, publishing centers. In the immediate postwar period (1918), instinctive exponents of the same spirit were already the *Freikorps*, the volunteer corps - such as that of the Baltics and of the well-known commander Ehrhardt - with their anti-communist struggle and their fighting on the run, on per dute positions (3). More compact formations were those that were to feed an already political array, such as P "Helm of Steel" (*Stahlhelm*) of the Seldte and Dusterberg. The army itself, the *Reichs- wehr*, in the period of the Weimar Republic saw only a kind of interregnum, it was, yes, loyal to the legal government, but maintained an intimate adherence to the ideas of the "conservative revolution" and an autonomy of its own: an autonomy which it (along with elements of career diplomacy and the industry) was not to lose altogether in the same period of Hitlerism. Overall, what was aimed at was an organic system, unified but not totalitarian, alien to fanatical mass nationalism, overcoming individualism, rationalism and enlightenment through qualitative and hierarchical values. All this, more as an act-

(2) The expression "secret Germania" goes back to the Eighteenth century, to the period of the Rosicrucians, the *seminarium* of which, according to some authors, was called "*Germania*". About the concept of *Reich* itself, especially the current of the "young conservatives" (*Jungkonservativen*) headed by Moller vanden Biuckeal Baron H. von Gleichen, formulated it in essentially spiritual terms: now not only did not correspond to the Hitler state, but not even to the Bismarkian state, for being, these, political forces oscillating both between nation-state and imperialistic state.

(3) Cf. Dominique Venner, *Ballikum*, Ciairapico, Rome, 1981 (Ed.).



tudine than as a theory or precise political program. Mohler, with reason, accuses a certain "dumbness" in the "conservative revolution" and points to what must have constituted its inferiority to the methods of the party that later won power: the repugnance to address the masses and act through them, the repugnance to propaganda and political struggle in the modern sense, the conviction that, as in other times, decisive should be the force of prestige and tradition.

Therefore, as noted above, in the thinking of not a few the National Socialist Third *Reich* represented a supplanting and counterfeit rather than the realization of the Third *Reich* desired by the current in question. To be sure, in the hodgepodge of ideas and tendencies co-present in National Socialism are to be found some that also belong to the "conservative revolution"; but, as Mohler rightly notes, here the question would arise as to the extent to which a doctrine can really be held accountable for achievements that do not conform to it (pp. 17-18). If, in the conservative-revolutionary camp, there were those who joined National Socialism, hoping to achieve its prefigured results by acting within it (4), there were not a few who, after an encounter that disillusioned them, abandoned it, and those who already at the outset fought it, placing themselves on the line of a more or less latent revolt. And the defections were countered by a not indifferent blood tribute paid by the conservative revolution, for many were its exponents who were victims of the repression of both June 30, 1934 (5) and July 20, 1944 (a military plot against Hitler, in which the part played precisely by elements of the current in question is still little known).

(4) 11 Mohler notes that they are affected by the ideas of the "conservative revolution" tendencies to create, during National Socialism, almost a State within the State, a kind of Order, as opposed to the mass panilo. And here it would be interesting to study the balls had by siff atte tendencies in the SS itself, an organization of which only the most contingent and deplorable aspects are known to us. In general, those who do not recognize in it a mere *aggregation* of conflicting forces, which were united only with a view to a resolution of certain unavoidable national problems and in the face of non-German influences, forces which, however, each aimed at giving itself alone its own fonna to theTotal Germany, judge Nazi Germany falsely. Those headed by Göring (with exponents of the rarifica/toc/^ wehr}, by Himmler himself and by elements of diplomacy (such as von Papen, the latter, however, immediately ousted, because he was too exposed) can be considered precisely as a Pala that reflected, more or less deformed, the conservative^revolutionary tendency, while l a propnately Nazi tendency was linked to Hitler, to Göbbels to Ley and partly also to Rosenberg.

(5) The so-called Night of the Long Knives during which mainly the SA leadership was purged, but also from other circles considered hostile to the new regime (Ed.).

Mohler in a considerable part of his book sought, in particular, to identify the "worldview" - *Weltanschauung* - more or less common to the various conservative-revolutionary currents. His framing, however, imposes some reservations. First of all, it seems to us that the author has focused too much on an ideal plane and too little on the political forms that really could correspond to the spirit of the movement. With regard precisely to political domination, it seems to us that he accentuates too much the gap that would have existed between those currents and real conservatism, including that with a monarchical tendency, a gap that in reality in Germany was not as great and general as the reader of the book would be led to believe. The process in the negative against the Second *Reich* itself was led only by extremist elements, who seemed to have little recollection of the part played in the Second *Reich* itself by the Federationist tradition.

As for the vision of the world, Mohler takes as his basis the opposition existing between two general conceptions, which he calls *linear* Fona, *cyclical* Fakra. According to the first, history is development, novelty, evolution, it tends toward a final end that justifies it - this is, this, the conception proper to the various progressive currents, but also to Christianity, as it gravitates toward an "end of time." The second conception, on the other hand, would be based on the idea of the "eterno return, de) recurrence of the same forms - and such would be the basic view of the "conservative revolution." Now, in our opinion, the opposition in such terms is not well formulated. If anything, one should speak of historicism and anti-historicism, of "civilization of being" and "civilization of becoming." It is not a matter of expecting the return of the same forms (Vico, Spengler), but of not believing that, as far as fundamental values are concerned, something changes: of recognizing a *normative* order containing already *a priori* and *ah initio* all the principles, without which a normal civilization and society are not conceivable.

To which can be linked another criticism of the scheme of Mohler, which too much draws on views of Nietzschean intonation, and on an immanentism that, to tell the truth, does little to reconcile with the spirit of a true conservatism, whether revolutionary or not. 1) Mohler ascribes to this an "anti-Christian" tendency, because the fundamental demand of the current dealt with would be unity, totality (*Ganzheit*). whereas Christianity is characterized by dualism, by the separation of two worlds, of which one does not have the same value as the other. Now, a distinction should be made here between dualism and dualism, for if there is one dilacerating dualism, there is, however, another that is the presupposition of all formative action in the traditional sense. If from the contingent world

one does not distinguish another, higher world, ideal and transcendent, the very possibility of conceiving an action from Taith, a hierarchy, a higher authority (such as Catholicism itself in its best period, up to a De Maistre, a Bonald, a Donoso Cortès, acknowledged them), and yet the foundation, without which one can no longer speak of conservatism or even of conservative revolution, but one takes problematic paths, paths in which actually not a few of the authors, mentioned by Mohler, ended up. And it is known that on no different line immanentism, unpurified and untransfigured Nietzscheanism, up to a more than suspicious "paganism" - had to take shape the most negative aspects of the National Socialist worldview.

Different views should therefore be introduced to spiritually characterize the best currents of authentic "conservative revolution," at a more adequate discrimination. Politically, it is right to recognize to them, with Mohler, a position of threefold independence: independence in the face of both Marxism, conservatism in the worst sense, and national socialism. Once this is acknowledged, it is natural that Mohler, albeit in a brief mention at the end of the book (p. 211 ), wonders whether such positions have expired altogether, or whether they might not by chance regain some topicality, for, as situations similar to those of the early postwar period reappear today, it is likely that the same demands toward a "third force"-a force that should keep away from both Communism and National Socialism, from both "progressivism" and "reaction," terms, the one and the other, now overused. In that case, it would all be a matter of seeing which hands would be capable of properly directing--without danger of slippage and subversion or supplanting--this time a reconstructive development in the sense mentioned, starting, of course, primarily from moral factors.

This remains, however, a separate point. Essentially, with the present notes we wanted to point out a remarkable contribution to the history of yesterday, which acquaints us with aspects of Germany that are less conspicuous, more secretive but ultimately even more significant and essential than those that have come to the foreground in the tragic events whose consequences Europe is still suffering.

*(Rassegna Italiana, no. 331, Rome, June 1952)*

## The ultimate Jünger: the Gordian knot

Ernst Jünger's name has already acquired European notoriety, and not as of today more than one critic has pointed out his works here as well. But in this regard we have been interested mainly in the scholar, in the master of an entirely personal and, in his own way, classical style. Only much more recently among our right-wing elements has attention been brought to Jünger as an exponent of the so-called "burnt generation" and of what came to be called the German "conservative revolution," because of the motives he had already formulated after World War I, which still possess a particular suggestive force.

Unfortunately, this is, however, only the Jünger of yesterday, the Jünger of an early group of works, the main one being *The Worker (Der Arbeiter)*, 1932). The more recent production, if it represents progress from a literary point of view, nevertheless accuses a visible drop in level as far as spiritual tension, political horizons, and outlook on life are concerned.

Thus his second production is affected by the ideas of a somewhat suspicious humanism, not unrelated to the attitude that took over, in reaction, in many German circles after the defeat, at a kind of anguish complex for anything that has the flavor of "totalitarianism."

Therefore, there is very little in today's Jünger that can interest us, outside the merely literary level: we find there confused ideas, one-sided and questionable framings. As an example, one can take-

dere one of his latest writings which is entitled// *Gordian Knot (Dergor-dische Knoten)* and which would like to deal with the relations between East and West as a historical theme (1).

Already from a methodological point of view the treatment is undermined by the misunderstanding inherent in presenting in terms of historical and civilizational antitheses what, if anything, are antitheses between spiritual categories, not having an obligatory relation to peoples, cultures and continents. For Jünger, the "Gordian knot" represents Asia, Alexander's sword cutting it represents Europe. The former would be symbolic of an existence bound by natural, elemental or divine forces, of a world characterized by the absence of limits, of an essentially despotic and arbitrary political society. Alexander's sword, on the other hand, would represent the luminous element, spiritual power, would be symbolic of a world that recognizes freedom, human respect, law, a greatness not traceable to mere power. At one point, the antithesis is even given in the terms of that between the titanic forces, vast and formless, and the Olympian forces, against them.

Already from this motif appears all the one-sidedness of such an approach, for cotoesto agonistic and antagonistic theme, before being Hellenic, was famously oriental, was known to Indo-Aryans and Persians. No less questionable is everything else. It is hard to see how one can charge the East with subjection to elemental, natural and divine forces, since it has known an ideal of absolute spiritual liberation at a metaphysical level that the West has very rarely achieved. Asian "despotism" is an old, predictable idea, which can be justified only if one stops at certain by-products of a degenerate and barbaric East, with satraps and hordes of Tartars, Huns and Mongols. Already the Oriental epics, but also the treaties of government, conobted T "asceticism of power" the type of ruler who is ruler of himself before he is ruler of peoples, the ideal of one who rules only by "heavenly mandate" (China). Of that unconditional tendency, which does not stop in the face of its own destruction, and which is declared incompatible with the "Western" ideal of personality, Jünger shows that he ignores the assumptions. And so one could go on, for so many other points touched upon without systematicity by Jünger. He, moreover, in order to avoid obvious absurdities, is often forced to conceive of an Asia that exists everywhere, as a substratum that bursts forth, for example, in the climate

(1) Tr it.: *there Gordian Knot*. in Ernst Jünger - Cari Schmitt, *The Gordian Knot. Dialogue on Oriente and the West in World History*. Il Mulino, Bologna, 1987 (ed.).

of civil guetTe and revolutions, in tyrannies, caesarism and totalitarianism. And this is precisely the point: in spite of everything, hovers between the pages of the book the ghost of theTopposition between "East" and "West" as we conceive it today in political terms, in theT "East" assimilating all that is opposed by democracy associated with a liberalism and a "humanism" that, to be often dignified and oriented toward "human values," does not cease to have a bourgeois background and is far from the horizons "beyond the zero point of values" that the Jùnger of the first period had pointed out.

For the political side, leaving aside oppositions in terms of continents, it should be noted that the real antithesis is not that between freedom and tyranny, but that between apolitical individualism and the principle of authority. Of a system based on the true principle of authority all that is despotism, tyranny, bonapartism, dictatorship of tribunes of the people is but a degeneration or an inverted image. This Jùnger seems to have forgotten, and in another of his last books, *Der Waldweg* (2), he deals only with what may be the position of the individual of the age of a totalitarianism advancing almost to the world imagined byTORwell in his 1984: as if nulTakro were conceivable nor to be expected in theTav to come. Because of this singular limitation of his horizons, almost dictated by anguish, one finds in theTultimate Jùnger therefore little that could be of interest to those who today fight in spite of everything along the lines of a "revolutionary right" and who are endowed by an adequate power of discrimination.

*(Il Popolo Italiano, Rome, Dec. 30, 1956)*

(2) *Lapsus for Der Wuldgang*. Tr ìC: *Treatise on the Rebel*, Mrip^ Milan, 1990 (Nd.C.J).



## At the wall of time

Ernst Jiinger is regarded as one of the greatest living German writers, and in Italy translations of several of his works have already come out from publishers that are in vogue (*Sulle scogliere di marmo* at Mondadori, *Giardini e strade* at Bompiani, *Radianze* at Longanesi) (1). However, in our country it has mainly been the well-known cliques of literary critics of amateur intellectuals who have taken an interest in him, having in view the aspects of Jiinger's works that fall within their oriz zonts and that meet their tastes, aspects, however, that for us are the least relevant.

For some time now, it has not been the literary Jiinger, the essayist, the writer of a highly personal polished style, who has attracted our attention, but rather the Author of early works that directly reflected the lived experience of life on the front in the war. Jiinger had just finished middle school when, intolerant of the stagnant bourgeois climate of theFenvironment in which he lived, he fled the pathema house to join the Foreign Legion. World War I broke out, he enlisted as a volunteer, was wounded many times and received the highest decorations to the

(1) Evola quotes, translating the original German title into Italian, what had been presented as *Diario 1941-1945* (Longanesi, Milan, 195 7). It will take the title *di Irradiazioni* only in a later edition, thirty-five years later (Guanda, Panna, 1993) (Ed.).



value. His books of the early period deal precisely with war. One has been able to call Jünger the "anti-Remarque": in contrast to the defeatist and pacifist literature of the early postwar period, he emphasized the spiritual, indeed transcendent, dimensions that war can present in its very modern "total" technicalized phoniles most destructive to a particular human type.

After the war books, came the work that for us remains our author's most important one, *The Worker-his figure, his sovereignty*. It had a wide echo and, in fact, is fundamental to the problem of the vision and meaning of life in the modern age. We will give a hint of its content: only a hint, partly because an essay of our own has come out on it, which holds the place of a translation of the book (which appeared not possible for various reasons) (2), to which we refer the reader.

There is a continuity between the war books and *The Worker*, in these terms: in the modern guena, man must stand up not so much to man (the enemy) as to the unleashing of technical means (the "battles of the material," "mechanical death") and, with them, of destructive forces of a no auman, "elemental" character (the "emergence of the ^elemental," as the forces of nature are "elemental"). It can hold itself together, can survive not only physically but especially spiritually in the vicissitudes into which one is thrown, only a new human type, one that knows how to leave behind all that binds itself to its own particular person and instincts, to the way of thinking and acting, to the "idealisms" and values of bourgeois life: a type capable of an absolute and impersonal commitment, loving action for its own sake, lucid and cold and, at the same time, ready for an elemental impetus, such, finally, as to be able to present and grasp a higher meaning of existence in the combination of life and danger, of life and destruction. Junger believed that he saw the incipient appearance of the type of a new humanity, almost of a new race, recognizable in the same physical features, in those who were not broken by the experience of modern war, who were, interionnnently, the victors of it, beyond the opposition of fronts and ideologies, as well as theLesitus of war.

*The Worker* develops similar motifs in relation to the general climate of the last civilization. The choice of the term "worker" is unfortunate. As the

(2) These reasons are still unknown, since Jiinger's response to Evola's previously imported 1953 letter is unknown, as mentioned in the Curator's Note. Perhaps the German writer at the time did not consider this induction appropriate for him (Ed.).

conceives Jünger, the "Worker" does not correspond to a social class. It is a new human type capable of actively adapting to everything in the modern world that is destructive from the point of view of the previous civilization. Not only in war but also in peace the forces set in motion by Man with technology and mechanization backfire. They destroy the ancient orders and values, and especially what the bourgeois epoch had tried to create with its conception of "society," with the cult of the individual, of reason, of "humanity." All this came into crisis by Tappant, again, of "elemental" forces in mechanical forms, in general objective processes, in a "total mobilization" of existence. As in guerilla, modern man is not given to escape the corresponding situation. Thus he is presented with the same alternative: to be destroyed - not physically but interiorly (modern nihilism, "death of God," materialization, leveling, regime of the masses), or to transform himself, to become a new being.

Jünger's "Worker" is a symbol and corresponds to this new type. Technique is the instrument with which he "mobilizes" the world, awakens, activates and dominates elemental forces. He confronts all the processes that by affecting the individual, by destroying all that subsists of the bourgeois, traditional, "museum" world, by dissolving the old social connections and habits, by abolishing more and more all that is color, variety, particularity, subjectivity, emphasizing instead the mechanical, the objective, seems to entail a deadly impoverishment, a disanimation of the whole existence. The "Worker" takes on all this for the purpose, so to speak, of an essentialization or purification ("the way of the salamander, which passes through the fire"). It is an existential challenge that tests him and, if the test is passed, leads him to affirm himself in a new dimension of being.

And even in this sphere Jünger believes in the heralding of a new type, with uniform characteristics recognizable even physically. To it are proper impersonality, the lucid, active adaptation to the end, the disdain for all that is merely individual, the clean break with the values of the past, the natural disposition to command or to obedience, to a "heroic realism," to a new positive anonymity (the symbol of the "unknown soldier," however to be integrated with that of the "unknown leader"). Jünger here had spoken of a style that can be said to be as much "Spartan" as "Prussian" or "Bolshevik" (referring to the "ascetic" type of early Communism). He had preconized new hierarchies established de facto, essentially with the differentiation of those who undergo the processes of dissolution inherent in a transitional phase and those who instead

take them on in an active way. In particular (and this is an interesting specific motif) he had spoken of a "metaphysics" closed within the mechanized world. In the supreme grades of the new hierarchical "Ope-ray" would embody that metaphysics in the forms of a new existential unity, beyond the antitheses of blood and spirit, of power and right, of freedom and necessity, of service and command. On such a basis, the ideal of Orders would be re-proposed: as those differentiated units of life where strict discipline imprinted a precise form on the individual's being and action. On of Orders should be based the new State, the State of the "Worker." Finally, beyond the transitional phase, from the dynamic, revolutionary c destructive phase in the world mobilized c transformed by technology, a "classical" phase, so to speak, was envisaged, with established, symbolic, accomplished fountains, almost as in the impersonal and sacred civilizations of the origins, however, now, with a planetary extension. For as technique irresistibly embraces the whole world, beyond all frontiers, so as the final stage can only be conceived of a system equally embracing the whole world, in which the figure and sovereignty of the "Worker" would be affirmed, after the last possible shocks between antagonistic blocs of powers.

In summary (c for the rest we must refer to an essay of our own) these were the views of *The Worker*. They exerted considerable influence on the German nationalist and fighter currents of the early postwar period and anticipated some essential orientations of the corresponding revolution, and then of National Socialism. However, precisely at the advent of this regime, there was a sudden change in orientation and level in Jiinger. He seems to have seen in many aspects of National Socialism a kind of distortion or reduction to absurdity of various positions of *The Worker*. Personally, he kept himself on the sidelines (in World War II, recalled, he did not particularly stand out). As a writer, his new production, when it did not have a character of simple literature and gleaning (notes, psychological observations, nonfiction, the futuristic fantasy novel Heliopolis--at a higher level, with symbolic content, *On Marble Cliffs*), presented a perceptible spiritual flaking. This is especially true of some of the minor writings with ideological pretensions, *the Peace Writing*, *li nodo gordiano* and *La via del busco* (3). One would almost say that, like not a few of his compatriots, he was a

(3) Literate translation of German titles. Works later appeared with others in Italian: *Hehopolis*. Rusconi, Milan. 1972; *Lapace*, Guanda, Panna 1993; *li nodo di Cardio*, il Mulino, Bologna. 1977; *Treatise of the Rebel*, *Mclphi*, Milan, 1990 (Nd.CT

nal, the defeat caused a *shock* in him and opened him sor- prcndentemcntc even to motives not far removed from the "democratic" or, at least, "humanistic" re-education conducted in Germany in the Innovo postwar period, in open contrast to those he had already defended in the previous period. Suffice it to say that, while he had coined the watchword of polling not on the areas in which one defends oneself but on those in which one attacks, c that of the challenge dcli"clmentarc," *The Way of the Woods* in the French edition could be described as a kind of manual "of the man of resistance," to whom are indicated the means of concealing and evading oneself in the era of "totalitarianisms." Even *Gordian Knot*, in which one would like to deal with the relations between "European" and "Eastern" ideals, is affected in more than one respect by the political watchwords of the new German climate.

Jünger's new book, *At the Wall of Time* (*An der Zeitmauer*, Klett-Vciag, Stuttgart, 1959), marks a change of course all over again and returns to some extent to the field of problems dealt with in *The Worker*. Spiritually, in comparison with the production just now mentioned, it thus represents a resolution (4). Objectively, however, it does not add much to what was valid in the earlier positions c that we were most interested in. The treatment is not c systematic; and instead of delving into the immanent problems of the inner formation and superordinate meanings of existence in the "age of the Worker," it largely takes itself into a different domain, into that of eschatology and the metaphysics of history.

Now, when one wants to enter such a domain, one can no longer proceed by personal intuition, but has to refer to precise traditional teachings, as pei example René Guénon c his school did, c as we ourselves have tried to do. The Jiinger lacks such references; he either goes it alone, or refers to the current culture, so the right things from him are picked up here c there, almost by chance, and are mixed with many digressions and dross.

The expression "wall of time" should be taken in an analogous sense of "wall of sound": a limit, overcoming which new forks of movement take over. The confused feeling of a world coming to an end is also that of a similar limit, to be crossed. There is a certain reference to the "civilization of the Worker," which now c presented as a "cosmic civilization," in the sense that in it the forces of Man begin to

(4) Surely this is the reason why Evola recommended the book and Giovanni Volpe, when the latter founded his own publishing house, and translated it under the pseudonym "Carlo d' Altavillalt came out in 1965 (Ed. ).

deeply affect the substratum of reality and nature, and to activate it (atomic era, new horizons of technology). In addition, according to Jünger, something would begin to move even in that bottom of the Universe, beyond Man, almost in the painful and, for now, destructive gestation of a new reality. The ideas of the Opererò return, in the sense that "metaphysical" powers are present behind the facade of the whole mechanized and disanimated modern world. And all the sufferances, crises, and sacrifices of the Ultimate Humanity (in "greater numbers than a Moloch has ever required and than the Inquisition has ever reaped") would be obscurely ordained at the outlet of this new era, beyond the "wall of time."

Actually, more than "time" here would be to speak, in a particular sense, of "historical epoch." In fact, Jünger starts from the observation, in itself correct (as well as in the writers of the "traditional" school and in ethnology itself, it is already found in Schelling), that what is habitually called prehistoric time, or "mythical" time (to be understood, before Herodotus), did not correspond to a mere portion of the same "historical time" that we know, but to a different time, to a different spiritual, human and existential climate, no longer known to us. After, there came the "historical age" in the proper sense as a cycle that, with all its values, institutions and ideas is about to come to an end: hence the sense of the "wall of time," beyond which, as beyond a hiatus or a "solution of continuity," powers and processes that are not merely human, that in a sense are "metaphysical," will resume acting, as in the "mythical" age ("trans-historical world"). Here, we cannot dwell on such ideas, which are of a very special field. However, the important thing would be to actively overcome that limit, here intervening an alternative similar to that already considered in other fields, for war, for the world of the "Worker." Beyond the limit, whatever happens, at least some should save "human freedom."

Before the new book came out, in examining *The Worker* we had already indicated the need to consider two possibilities of the outcome of the whole process of ultimate civilization, positive Tuna, negative the other. In fact, for that emergence of the "elemental" and for the whole technical, mechanical, disanimated world, the enemy of the individual and the human, one can also conceive of a negative, regressive, barbaric ("arimanic")-and in the same regards to the new type, as we have seen, Jünger had been able to juxtapose Spartan type, Prussian type and "Bolshevik" type under the sign of a single active, anti-personalistic realism: which was already significant. In the new book, Jünger also comes to

recognize the danger of this negative outlet, which would lead toward "zoological, magical or titanic orderings." Corresponding to the well-known anxieties that in our contemporaries, in the event of war, counterbalance the atomic age with the incipient "second industrial revolution" that should bring all good and all happiness, there is also no shortage of hints of a possible catastrophe of planetary proportions. But the prevailing tone of the book seems to be optimistic. The nihilistic phase can be overcome. The dissolutions and leveling are likened to the hand of lime given to the walls of a dwelling that awaits other tenants. Emptiness is noted; however, it is thought to be that of a new form, or mold, created by a higher force to be filled. The ancient motif reappears, as a kind of faith, with reference to the type of the "Worker." Considering all that is happening and may yet happen, the Jünger says; "From that fire, we see rising only the figure of the Worker, having become more mighty. This suggests that the most igneous elements are concealed in him and that they have not yet had a pure fusion. There are still many empty molds."

But with this also meets the essential problem, which is not solved by a simple image. Indeed, the problems, properly, are twofold. First, it is to be asked whether beyond the bourgeois era and the subsequent nihilism will really come to the climate of high tension (of "extreme temperatures") that characterizes the horizons of the world of the "Worker" and "heroic realism." for to many such a world may well seem anachronistic and fanatical, given the ideals of a safer, easier, "social" life, on the other hand, with science and technology at the service of the human animal duly harnessed and normalized: these are the ideals predominantly cultivated today in various areas of the world, especially in the democratic Occident and consumerist society. Secondly, in the hypothesis that the world of the "Worker" is formed, the problem concerns a necessary, essential internal change, which would make the "metaphysics" to which Jünger so often refers as the invisible counterpart and justification of that world, thus also de! new type or, at least, of the higher exponents of it, appear as something more than an empty word and an optimistic assumption.

He had already earlier warned of both the gap and the problem, by comparing the type of the "Worker" to a coin that on one side is heavily minted but on the reverse side is shapeless. And here, by hypothesis (that is, by the fact that the nihilism of the transitional phase excludes the contribution that values of the earlier tradition could make) everything remains at the

fluid and problematic state; nothing external can point a direction and provide support. For the problem of the "spiritualization" of the new type (spiritualization in a deep, ontological, existential sense, beyond theories, morals and religious confessions) and thus also of the whole new civilization and the earth controlled by the "Ope- ray," Jünger in his last book hints at two possibilities. The first, is that this happens through a cosmic process, which uses man as a means and a collaborator endowed with a responsibility and a faculty of direction. But here we remain in the realm of a pure hypothesis, and it does not seem to us that such a hypothesis today is supported by anything positive and tangible, even if only as a distant hint. The second possibility is that from man himself the initiative starts, that he with an increasingly precise consciousness penetrates deeper and deeper layers of reality, beyond the "historical" (we are not sure what Jünger means here), mobilizing and spiritualizing them. But this is obviously a vicious circle, for to spiritualize and transform one must begin by spiritualizing and transforming oneself. That is, it would require that "mutation" (understand "mutation" precisely in the sense the term has in biology and genetics, where it designates the abrupt and inductible origin of new species or forms) which, precisely, is the problem. Instead in this regard we have, in Jünger, only the vague and optimistic "cosmic" perspectives, that is, of a general process, in the sense attributed to it by his interpretation. Now, the hundred of gravitation and the justification of the whole in sienie connect precisely to this point.

Given the mentioned asystematic character of *To the Wall of Time*, it is not the case here to develop a more detailed analysis of its content. Already from the references made it will be possible to see how, compared to *The Worker*, the plane is noticeably shifted, in a direction where, let us repeat, it is difficult not to digress with merely personal ideas when one does not refer to a firm traditional doctrine. Instead, to the valid positions of the first book, which may be of interest to us, almost nothing has been added. As we have said, this valid and important part refers to the problematic relating to a new human type which, congenitally akin to that of the unbroken man formed by selection in the Great War, is capable of overturning the most dissolving and nihilistic processes of the present technicalized epoch and often carried by new elemental forces, and of making them serve a spiritual formation of his own, beyond all that belongs to the bourgeois world, but also to the disanimated and chaotic phase of transition: for positive developments, which, however, presuppose an internal change in the

human substance, the possession of a spiritual core because it is existentially connected to something transcendent (we express ourselves roughly, because the discourse here would be long). In this regard, we have often used the formula and the symbol of "riding the tiger."

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